

JEWEL

**CAN 5 MILLION FANS
BE WRONG?**

Entertainment Weekly

**THE STRANGE
BUT TRUE
STORY OF HOW
CONSPIRACY
THEORY MADE IT
TO THE SCREEN**

ISSUE #392
AUGUST 15, 1997

Julia & Mel

**WHY WE'RE
FIGHTING
OVER
IN THE
COMPANY
OF MEN**

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FOR MEN

A woman with dark hair and red lipstick is seen from the chest up, framed by a car window. She has her eyes closed and is blowing a kiss, with her hand held up near her face. She is wearing a light-colored, textured jacket. The background is dark, suggesting it's nighttime. The car's interior and window frame are visible. The overall mood is romantic and sensual.

LIVE
OUTSIDE
THE
LINES

GITANO

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**70 JEWEL FOR THOUGHT:** We give the vinyl release of her *Pieces of You* a critical spin

ON THE COVER
Julia Roberts
and Mel Gibson
photographed
for EW by
Firooz Zahedi

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CHEER MEN OF THE BOARDS
Nominate your favorite
summer flicks on EW.com's
movie bulletin boards.

[illegible]

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Aug. 16, 1977: Elvis Presley dies—
and here, from El Vez to Elvis
Herselvis, is what he left behind.

Mail

BLOND AMBITION

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE Hanson article (#389, July 25). I'm glad that a "grown-up" magazine has recognized the talented trio. Their success is proof that age has nothing to do with creativity. Now the adults who shun young groups will see what they're missing.

MICHELLE GIBSON
Knoxville, Tenn.

I WAS QUITE ALARMED to find the sickeningly sweet Hanson brothers adorning your cover. It seems no one is free from their infectious charm. Being an Oklahoman, I know all too well of this abnormally normal "trio of tykes from Tulsa." Hanson's overzealous promoters should heed the advice of its oldest member, Isaac: "The last thing you want is overkill."

LEINA BOCAR
Oklahoma City

'LIFE' IS SWEET

THANK YOU FOR FEATURING *LIFE With Louie* as your "Winner of the Week." *LIFE With Louie* is a show that always puts forth a positive message without ever talking down to kids. I challenge any parent to tune in any Saturday morning and not become a fan.

RUSSELL P. MARLEAU
Producer, *LIFE With Louie*
RPMdet@aol.com
Glendale, Calif.

DOG STARS

PUG LOVERS AREN'T FEELING PUG-nacious about the treatment the pug stars received during the filming of *Men in Black*. We certainly have no bones to pick with the producers of *MiB* as they scrupulously followed American Humane Association guidelines. We're just hoping the fans of the blockbuster follow that old maxim: "Hey kids, don't try this at

home." It's a dog-eat-dog world out there, and we don't want to see any real-life canines, sans safety gear, shaken or stirred.

SHERRIE C. WOODBURY
President, Little Angels Pug Rescue
pugdud@ix.netcom.com
Pasadena

'ANIMAL' RIGHTS

I DON'T READ EW, BUT A FRIEND told me there was a recent piece on *Animal House* that mentioned everybody connected with it but me. I'm hurt. As you may know, since writing *Animal House* with Doug Kenney and Chris Miller, I've cowritten numerous comedies, directed several, and acted in a few as well. You don't need to publicize my career, but if you happen to mention films that I've worked on, please credit me accordingly.

HAROLD RAMIS
Ocean Pictures
Los Angeles

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Harold, we're hurt that you don't read EW, but we are sorry we forgot to mention that you cowrote Animal House. You should consider EW a must-read, and now you see why.*

CORRECTIONS: A photograph of Marshall Thompson in *To Hell and Back* was incorrectly identified as Audie Murphy. Billy Bob Thornton had a small role in *Indecent Proposal* (Video). *Forrest Gump's* opening weekend gross was \$4 million higher than *Contact's* (Movies).

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If we can still close the suitcase, we're not done packing.

VIRGINIA SLIMS

It's a woman thing.



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NEWS & NOTES

August 15, 1997 // Movies // TV // Books // Music // Video // Multimedia // Edited by Albert Kim



TALE OF TWO TOWNS



COSTNER

A pair of movies go on location—to very different receptions. by **Dan Burkhardt and Vanessa Ho**

HOLLYWOOD JUST LOVES SMALL towns. From *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* to *Phenomenon*, mainstream movies have rarely displayed anything but reverence for that white-picket world of green lawns, Little League, and values like fairness and civility.

But just how well do Hollywood and small-town America really mix? Every year, scores of productions forgo the controlled sterility of L.A.'s soundstages for the verisimilitude of location shooting. What exactly happens when Sunset Boulevard meets Main Street, USA?

For the people of Metaline Falls, Wash., what was supposed to be a short, giddy fling with Hollywood turned into a summer of discontent. For two months beginning in May, the small hamlet near the Canadian border hosted Warner Bros.' production of *The Postman*, a postapocalyptic thriller star-

ring and directed by **Kevin Costner**. The crew turned Metaline Falls—chosen for its rugged beauty and its proximity to Boundary Dam, where a number of scenes were set—into a disaster area to convey the look of a village in the wake of a global cataclysm. Workers attached decrepit facades to some buildings and sprayed a dark, grimy film on others. But some residents say the "disaster" was more than fictional. "They flipped this place upside down," complains one 50-year-old local, tired of the noise and congestion. "We lost our summer. If it happened again, I'd move. I'd put my house on the market right now."

Of course, the townspeople were warned of the changes beforehand, but few were prepared for its scope. Metaline Falls has a population of 230; *Postman*'s cast and crew numbered more than 300. Many were irritated when filming, which was



REDFORD

supposed to last a few weeks, ended up taking two months. And the Hollywood folks did little to open communications: Most stayed in larger towns and barely mingled with locals. "They had to bring in lobsters and crab legs," sniffs Mayor Lee McGowan of the catered meals the cast and crew chose over local eateries.

For its part, Warner says Metaline Falls' sensibilities were considered. "We tried to adapt to the town's needs and went out of our way to compensate people generously," says a studio spokesman. In truth, Warner hired residents to help on the production, and it estimates it will ultimately have poured about \$7 million into the region's economy. "Personally, I was thinking of the dollars I'll be counting," says McGowan, noting that the windfall outweighed any inconvenience.

But goodwill is a shakier commodity. Around the same time *The Postman* was being returned to sender, the people of Big Timber, Mont., were hailing Disney's *The Horse Whisperer* with open arms. Based on the best-selling novel about a Manhattan family that moves west, the film—directed by and starring **Robert Redford**—generated hardly a whisper of city-slicker bashing in this cozy burg (pop. 1,600). Before arriving, the roughly 200 cast and crew members were given manuals on how to deal with Mon-

tanans. Combine the good etiquette with a generous production budget (reportedly \$85 million), and it's easy to see why Big Timber accepted the role of Hollywood North this summer. "We had the worst year in 39 years," Jack Fuller, owner of the Timber Bar, says of the town's recent economic slump. "But this"—he gestures toward the film crew crowding his tavern—"is pulling us out."

For the past two months—shooting concludes in mid-September—Big Timber's denizens have been de facto *Whisperer* crew members: They even take it upon themselves to flack for the film. "I'll have to clear it before I say anything," a restaurateur tells a reporter asking about the stars, "with Bob." (That would be Redford.)

The scene was never so sunny back in Metaline Falls. The town bakery, Katie's Oven, became a vacant shell for *The Postman*, its walls soiled, its windows darkened. Owner Katie Parker was told she'd be closed 8 to 10 days; it lasted three weeks. Although Warner paid Parker, "it's hard to compensate for ill will," she says.

Hollywood might want to take a lesson from Dick Rose, who owns the Winchester Cafe in nearby Livingston. When *Whisperer* rode into town, Rose advised his waitresses: "Be polite and respectful. It's okay to say, 'Good evening, Mr. Redford.' But definitely not, 'Hi, Bob! Would you sign the menu?'" In other words, civility. One of those small-town virtues that Tinseltown loves to celebrate in the movies. ■

SPECIAL DELIVERY:
Costner in *The Postman*



LAST OF THE BEATS

LEGACY

In his three-piece suit and fedora, he looked like an accountant—which is perversely fitting, since for most of his ultraboheemian life, **William S. Burroughs** made even the most outrageous of his fellow writers look buttoned-down.

Burroughs, 83, who died Aug. 2 of a heart attack in Lawrence, Kan., was more than simply the last survivor of the trio of writers—Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg—who defined the Beat movement. He was pop culture's éminence grise, a writer who in his 70s and 80s had a cult following of twentysomethings.



BARD OF BOHEMIA: Burroughs

His grotesquely cosmic, comic, cartoonish, paranoid imagination fed directly into the rebellious adolescent precincts of the national psyche. "Heavy metal" was lifted from his work. Steely Dan took their name from his most famous novel, *Naked Lunch* (1959), the book that effectively ended literary censorship in America after a federal court ruled in favor of its publication in 1962.

He produced a single with Kurt Cobain and had cameos in such movies as *Twister* and *Drugstore Cowboy*. He even made a Nike commercial in 1994.

In 1951, Burroughs was in Mexico City—married but pursuing homosexual affairs—when he accidentally shot and killed his wife, Joan. The incident, he later wrote, turned him into a writer: "The death of Joan brought me in contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit, and maneuvered me into a lifelong struggle, in which I have had no choice except to write my way out." He also tried to write his way out of a long-term heroin addiction. (His first book, *Junkie*, was a graphic account of his drug battles.)

Burroughs said his randomly composed novels were "all sort of one book." Critics are divided on that book. Some pronounced him a visionary of the subtle addictions of modern life. Others thought him impenetrable and deranged. But by the time he settled in Lawrence in 1981—writing, making paintings by shooting paint cans, giving campus readings—he was secure in his position as CEO of avant-garde alienation. —L.S. Klepp

HOT SHEET

What the country is talking about this week...

1 BARRY SWITZER The Cowboys coach forgot there was a revolver in his luggage. The underwear hanging in his gun rack should have been a clue.

2 BARBARA WALTERS She's made the best-dressed list once again. She wants to win the Lily Pulitzer prize.

3 WOODSTOCK It's been 28 years since the festival began. Go home.

4 BABY TALK Scientists say we use it to teach children to speak. And to communicate with adult men.



45 CLINT EASTWOOD He's lending his name to a line of golf clothes. Can you get the pants without the built-in holster?

6 ELVIS It's the 20th anniversary of his death. Many people believe he's alive and still walking this flat earth.

7 FREE WILLY 3 The whale that never learns. Shouldn't we spend our time saving a smarter animal?

8 MARV ALBERT Reports say the sportscaster's name was found in the little black book of a murdered dominatrix. Keep this up and he can go into politics.

9 CONSPIRACY THEORY Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts stumble onto something that will throw the government into utter chaos. It's called Congress.

10 ROMANCE NOVELISTS One top writer admitted she'd plagiarized the work of another. She missed her calling—writing for television.

11 MONTSERRAT The tony Caribbean island resort has been destroyed by a volcano. And all I got was this lousy T-shirt.

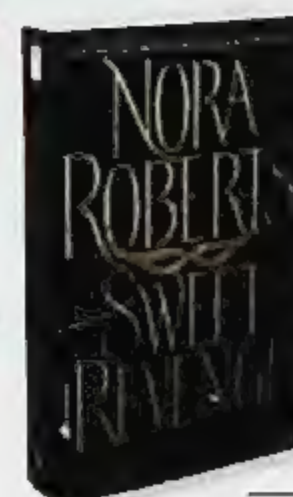
12 HARRISON FORD The *Air Force One* star is suddenly sporting a gold earring. Except for the rest of his face, you'd never know he was 55.

13 KELSEY GRAMMER The comic actor was nervous about getting married again. But Jim Carrey told him to call anytime for advice.

14 WNBA Women's pro basketball is drawing bigger crowds than predicted. It's not sports that women don't like, it's men.

15 UPS Their workforce is idle; few packages are moving. You'd think you were at a U.S. post office.

STOLEN KISSES



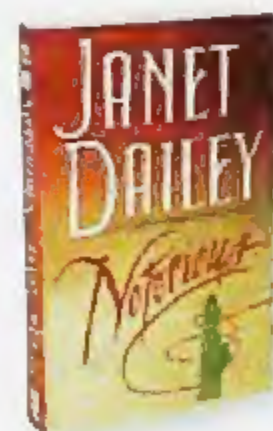
[EDITOR'S NOTE: In keeping with the spirit of the recent news that best-selling romance novelist Janet Dailey had plagiarized from fellow writer Nora Roberts, the following bulletin has been entirely "plagiarized" from other news articles. Unlike Dailey, we list our sources below.]

There is a reason romance novels all seem to read alike.¹ Janet Dailey, who has written 93 novels, has 200 million books in print, and even has an award named after her, has admitted lifting excerpts from the work of Nora Roberts (125 novels, 30 million in print). A fan happened to read *Notorious* by Dailey and *Sweet Revenge* by Roberts back-to-back and posted strikingly similar passages on the Internet.²

By Dailey's own admission, she has big problems. In a statement, she said her "essentially random and non-pervasive acts of copying are attributable to a psychological problem that I never even suspected I had."³

"Every writer and creative person has their personal demons or buzzing doubts: Can we do it again? Can we be creative enough?" says romance writer Betina Krahn. "When a story like this breaks, it touches us deeply."⁴

HarperCollins has stopped shipping *Notorious*. Roberts has been so distraught she is only now getting back to writing.⁵ "Plagiarism is a line that can't be crossed," Ms. Roberts said. "Plagiarism is theft, therefore I've been robbed and I've been robbed repeatedly."⁶



[EDITOR'S NOTE: Some non-plagiarized news: Harlequin, which had planned to publish Dailey's *Scrooge Wore Spurs in the Fall*, is holding the book up. Dailey's next novel with HarperCollins, *Calder Pride*, tentatively scheduled for winter '98, is also up in the air. Dailey had no further comment.]

—Kristen Baldwin, with reporting by Matthew Flamm

¹ Associated Press; July 30, 1997; by Jeff Wilson

² TIME; Aug. 11, 1997; by Belinda Luscombe

³ Los Angeles Times; Aug. 4, 1997; by David Streitfeld

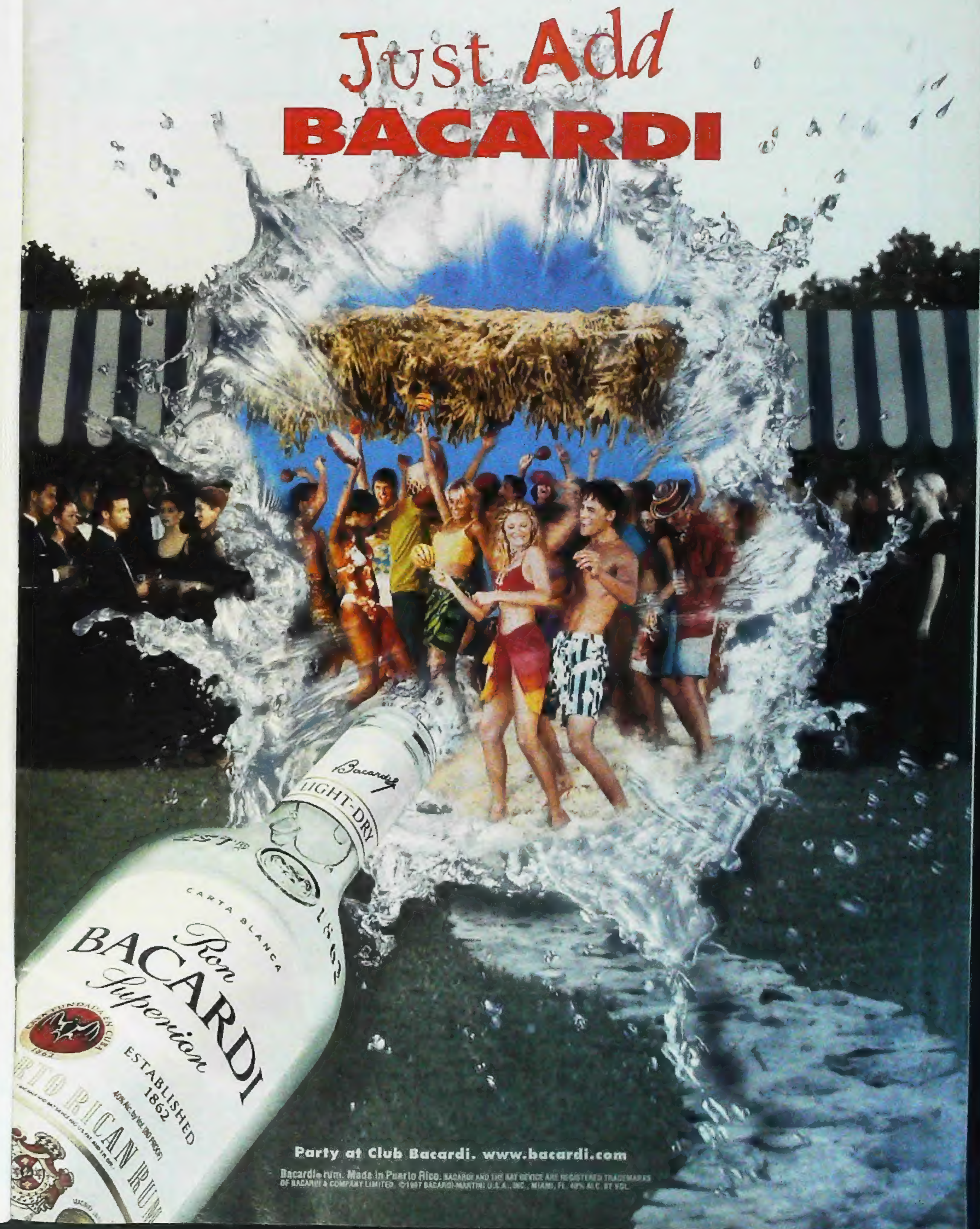
⁴ USA Today; July 31, 1997; by Nanci Hellmich

⁵ Newsweek; Aug. 11, 1997; by Marc Peyser and Yahlin Chang

⁶ Associated Press; July 31, 1997; by Mike Schneider



STRICTLY BY THE BOOK: Dailey (above) has proved to be an avid reader of romance rival Roberts



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FLASHES

A WING AND A PRAYER:

To paraphrase **Kermit the Frog**, it's not easy being a Muppet. At a recent publicity event at New York's Fashion Cafe to debut Kmart's Sesame Street line of clothes, pitch-woman **Penny Marshall** was leading a cast of fuzzy friends down the runway—"On one of the episodes of *Laverne & Shirley*," recalls Marshall, "Shirley showed me how to model, so I figured I could help out"—when things took a fowl turn. As Marshall attempted to teach **Big Bird** a dramatic twirl, she lost her footing and frantically grabbed at him for balance. Much to her horror—not to



MARSHALL AND BIRD

mention that of the predominantly preteen crowd—Marshall latched on to Big Bird's right wing and promptly tore it off. Unruffled, Big Bird quipped, "It'll grow back," and continued to model his "lovely one-armed garment." Later, Marshall ruefully vowed to "never again [work with puppets] now that I injured the bird." As they say, a bird in the hand... —*Josh Wood*

TALKING THE TALK:

Fans at the recent Just for Laughs comedy festival in Montreal got more than just their share of yuks when a tribute to **Roseanne** turned into a preview of the domestic goddess' Q&A skills. (Her talk show is set to air in fall '98.) After listening to videotaped love notes from **James Brolin**, **Cybill Shepherd**, and **Fran Drescher**, the comedian took center stage from emcee **Martin Mull** and fielded questions from the audience. Highlights: Q: "Roseanne, who is your inspiration?" A: "Charles



ROSEANNE

Manson." Q: "Seriously." A: "That's my answer. Jesus Christ! Sit down!" Q: "Tell us about the lean years." A: "I've never had a lean year, you bitch." Q: "How do you want to be remembered?" A: "As the richest f---ing woman on earth!" Afterward, the hosts presented Roseanne with a bouquet. "Oh," snorted the diva, "here come the f---ing roses." Who says the art of conversation is dead? —*Cynthia True*

PUPPY UPPER: Further proof that narrowcasting is out of control: A Cleveland couple is attempting to launch The Puppy Channel, a cable network devoted to "puppies being puppies" 24 hours a day.

"Have you ever looked at a puppy and not felt better?" asks Dan Fitz-Simons, who runs the TV-development

company Channemals with his wife, Carol. The entrepreneur envisions a sort of anti-*When Animals Attack* station that will give viewers a place to "park" while waiting for favorite shows. Although the pair have approached 500 cable operators, so far it's been all bark but no bite. "Several of the major systems have expressed an interest, but no one has said, 'Here's a check for \$25 million,'" says Fitz-Simons, noting that the glut

of channel wannabes makes securing a spot hard. Still, the couple plan to use their own money to put the channel into 100,000 homes via public access by the end of December. If all goes well, can Kitty TV be far behind? —*Kristen Baldwin*

CASTING CALL

Andrew Cunanan: *The Movie* may be made after all. Although Hollywood execs initially denied any interest in the gay serial killer's story, ABC confirmed last week that the network is considering a made-for-TV movie about Cunanan. Online observers have already begun casting the story's principals. Here are recent suggestions from America Online's Celebrity Talk message board. —*Kipp Cheng*

CUNANAN



- Dean Cain (made-for-TV)
- Robert Downey Jr. (feature)

GIANNI VERSACE



- Kelsey Grammer (made-for-TV)
- Patrick Stewart (feature)

DONATELLA VERSACE



- Madonna (feature)
- Debbie Harry (made-for-TV)

NAOMI CAMPBELL



- Naomi Campbell (both)

RANDOMQUOTE

"There are other C-words that are worse."

—*Suddenly Susan*'s Brooke Shields on whether she minds being called a chick



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID COWLES

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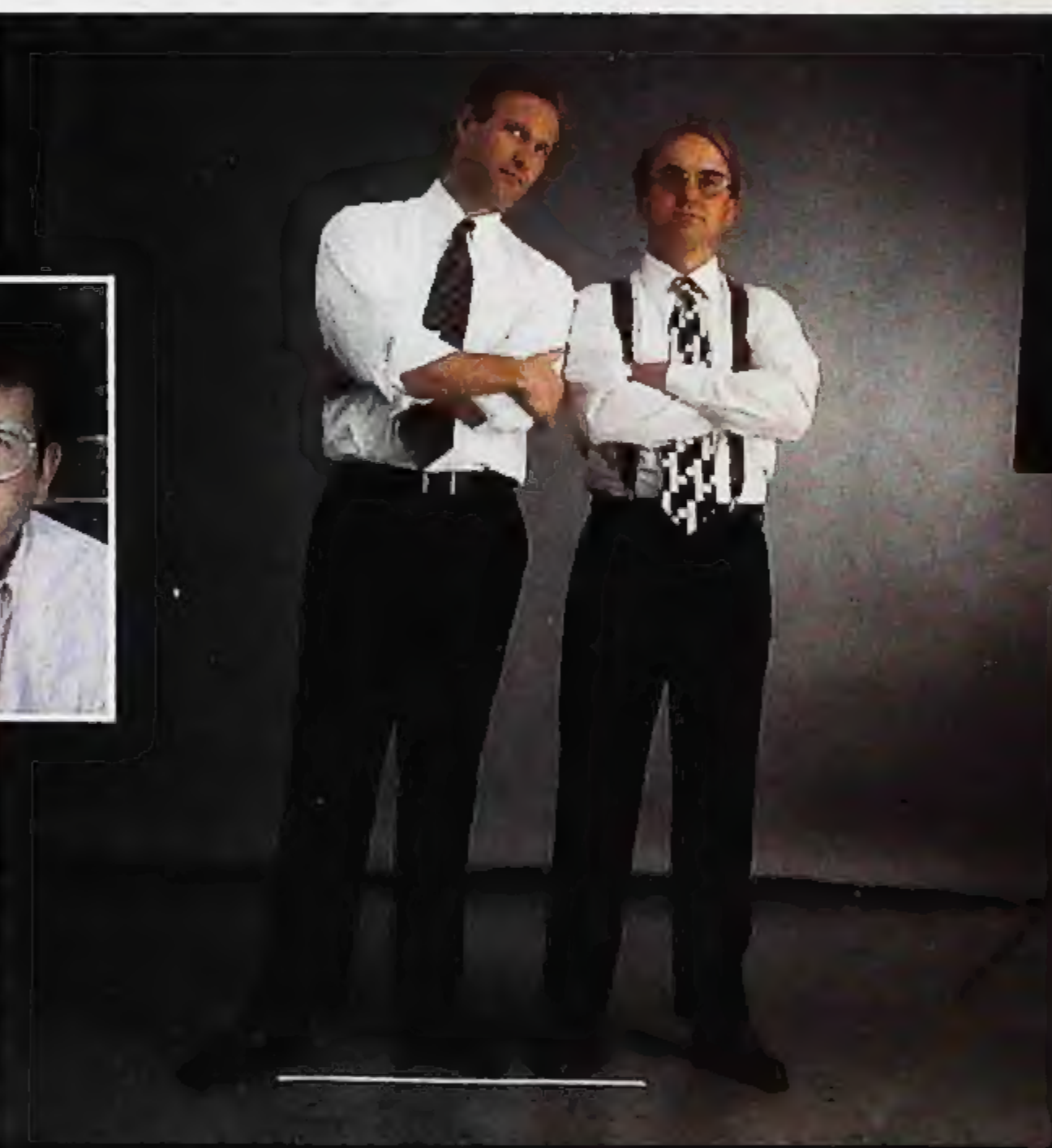
In the Company of Men is this summer's most controversial—and infuriatingly provocative—indie film. **by Steve Daly**

EIGHT MONTHS AGO first-time filmmaker **Nell LaBute** got the call that changed his life. He'd written and directed *In the Company of Men*, a dour tale of brutally misogynistic white-collar types, on a \$25,000 shooting budget. He'd submitted a crude, black-and-white videotape rough cut to the Sundance Film Festival. To his shock, it had been accepted. Immediately, LaBute phoned his cameraman, Tony Hettinger, who was in a supermarket buying a toilet brush when he answered his cellular. "He was yelling 'Omigod, omigod!'" recalls LaBute. "People around him in the store were saying 'Hey, it's just a brush.'"

But the brush was exactly what LaBute and crew felt they were getting once they reached that much bigger supermarket, the Sundance festival itself, where their movie promptly began dividing audiences into loved-it and loathed-it camps. And why wouldn't it? The shockingly nasty plot follows a high-stakes game of abusive sexual conquest, in which an angry mid-level corporate type (**Aaron Eckhart**) ropes his colleague (**Matt Malloy**) into a plan to woo, pretend to compete for, then cruelly dump a deaf secretary (**Stacy Edwards**)—as "payback" for the wrongs of all women.

While Sundance audiences generally agreed that LaBute had composed an art-

Of Malice And Men



MEN BEHAVING VERY BADLY: Eckhart, left, and Malloy play the cruel tricksters; director LaBute (inset) worried about finding a distributor

fully stark film, accusations of sexism wafted through the thin Utah air. It didn't help when LaBute opened a press conference by joking, deadpan, that he'd made *Men* because he "always thought deaf people were funny." More controversy is sure to follow. In a summer rife with flavor-of-the-week action blockbusters and a largely disappointing glut of indies, *In the Company of*

Men, now opening around the country, looks to be the one film that promises to fuel watercooler discussions for months to come.

That it's in theaters at all might be some kind of small, dark miracle, since the debate at Sundance grew serious enough to scare off American distributors. Leading man Eckhart recalls that the film initially received an "extremely pos-

itive" reaction from high-ranking execs at No. 1 indie factory Miramax, but the filmmakers were "crushed" when chairman **Harvey Weinstein** passed on it. Privately, LaBute heard that the movie had "disgusted" more than one studio honcho, and it hardly suggested any "obvious packaging angles" that would make it easy to market. So, for two more months, LaBute and producer Stephen Pevner continued to shop it. Then, just as *Men* screened at New York's New Directors/New Films series in March to an enthusiastic thumbs-up from *The New York Times'* **Janet Maslin**, Sony Pictures Classics finally struck a deal for U.S. distribution.

"We waited it out," says LaBute, who was impressed with Sony's "passion" about marketing the tricky property. Though Sony hasn't realized hopes of finding a liquor or cigarette company to help promote the film, whose characters smoke and drink, LaBute says the film company has a "strong plan" to "nurse word of mouth" as the way to sell *Men*. Among Sony's buzz-raising ploys: screening the film for a mixed audience of high-salaried male Wall Streeters and feminist film fans. Says LaBute: "[Copresident] Tom Bernard told me with a kind of glee that the more the men laughed, the more you could feel women getting furious. He's like, 'I'll be happy when there are fistfights outside [New York's] Angelika theater.'"

A taste for bile hardly



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seems to fit the affable LaBute, 34, a married Mormon and father of two. "I didn't have an extreme or unhappy upbringing," he says.

"And I guess you're often fascinated with what you don't know. But it's almost in a clinician's way. And that's why I feel a sort of affinity for [director **Stanley**] **Kubrick**. I've always felt he was kind of picking with tweezers at things, going, What's under this layer? I'm really quite drawn to that sort of scientific approach to unspeakable things."

If LaBute's the scientist, Eckhart, 29, is the lab assis-

tant who actually had to carry out *Men's* mean experiment on screen. "I got stopped in the street by this woman in New York last week," says Eckhart, who studied a medical textbook on psychopathology to flesh



DAINGEROUS GAME: Edwards and Malloy

out Chad's bone-chilling brand of self-absorption. "She said: 'I saw that movie. You are evil.' It seems like for any woman who's really been shat on in a relationship, this film really brings a lot of fury to the surface." ■

'MEN' ON THE STREET

Though it opened to stronger business in New York City than in six California burgs—which goes to show that mean movies play best on mean streets—viewers on both coasts (more than half of them women) had plenty to say about *Men*:

■ **GAYLE**, 33, handbag product developer, Venice: "The main guy was a sicko. I just kept thinking, Karma, karma, karma."

■ **ELAINE**, 29, consultant, NYC: "It was more antimalle than it was misogynist. They were depicted as totally evil. No one is actually that evil."

■ **GREG**, 25, real estate agent, Los Angeles: "It's exaggerated and unrealistic. I don't know too many guys like Chad."

■ **ELIZABETH**, 37, theater professor, NYC: "I don't think this is so shocking. *Carnal Knowledge* deals

with the same issues and it's actually a little more shocking."

■ **HEIDI**, 33, waitress, West Hollywood: "I've never met any [men] like that. Or maybe I have. That's a scary thought."

■ **BRIAN**, 30, film producer, NYC: "I was snocked to see that the crowd was 50–60 percent women, because most of the women I know have left somewhat repulsed by it. But...it's still more interesting to the average woman than, say, *Liar Liar*." —SD, with reporting by Allison Gaines and Carrie Bell

MONITOR



CAMPBELL AND COLT



STALLONE AND FLAVIN

WEDDINGS *Frasier's* **Kelsey Grammer**, 42, married film student **Camille Donatacci**, 28, Aug. 2, in Malibu, Calif. It's the third marriage for Grammer, reportedly the first for Donatacci... Scottish import **Sheena Easton**, 38, wed documentary filmmaker **Timothy Douglas Delarm**, 36, July 28, in Las

Vegas. The couple met last month on a shoot in Yellowstone National Park for a wildlife documentary. It is Easton's third marriage, Delarm's first.

SPLITS *Party of Five's* **Neve Campbell**, 23, and her husband, Canadian actor **Jeff Colt**, 29, announced July

29 that they're separating after 2½ years of marriage. No reason for the split was given. Campbell is currently in L.A. filming *Scream 2*.

RECOVERING On July 28, model **Jennifer Flavin**, 28, the wife of **Sylvester Stallone**, 51, suffered a miscarriage in Miami. Flavin, who had been 10 weeks pregnant with the couple's second child, is in good health. The couple's 11-month-old daughter, **Sophia Rose**, underwent surgery after she was born last August to repair a hole in her heart.

DEATHS TV commercial actress **Edith Fore**, 81, July 31, of natural causes, in Camden, N.J. In 1990, former nurse Fore uttered the now-famous words "I've fallen and I can't get up" in a commercial for the Lifecall

Medic Alert system. She was recruited for the spot, for which she was paid \$500, after she fell and used the device to get help.... Helicopter pilot **J. David Jones**, 61, July 14, of lung cancer, in Redway, Calif. One of Hollywood's top aerial coordinators, Jones was best known for his work on *Funny Girl*, for which he choreographed the shot of **Barbra Streisand** on a tugboat, and *Apocalypse Now*, for which he planned the "Flight of the Valkyries" sequence. "No matter how outrageous a director's demands, it was never too much for him," says director **Simon West**, who worked with Jones on *Con Air*. "He was one of those great characters you come across now and again in the business who was just very special." —Anna Holmes

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CONSPIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW...

and

Julia

How did she look upon screens? What was her life like?

A

BUTTERFLY floats over a field of sunflowers in Iowa, and millions of miles away in Japan, the ground begins to shake with the rumblings of a deadly earthquake. ■

Or, a glass of Evian (no ice, slice of lemon) is

spilled at Spago, and *Titanic's* release date is moved back six months. ■ It is, as our mothers warned us, the little things that count. ■ Take *Conspiracy Theory*, starring Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts and directed by Richard Donner, a story

about a taxi driver (Gibson) who may or may not be crazy and a Justice Department attorney (Roberts) who becomes the target of both his amorous attentions and far-fetched fantasies. (Such as, the Vietnam War was fought over a bet Howard Hughes lost to Aristotle Onassis.) On the surface, the film seems to exist because two huge movie stars and a veteran director made the decision to work together.

But listen carefully to *Conspiracy Theory* producer Joel Silver on the way things get done in Hollywood: "A movie star can walk out of her house and ask the gardener if she should make a movie with Mel Gibson. Very few people have power, but *everyone* has influence."

Then consider this: *Conspiracy Theory* was made because of a delivery of champagne, a platter of smoked salmon, and one very talented brass band. And that's just the beginning.

1. 'CONSPIRACY THEORY' EXISTS BECAUSE

MEL GIBSON
WAS SCARED
JOEL SILVER
WOULD EAT HIM:

Six years ago, Julia Roberts and Mel Gibson decided to make a Western romantic

comedy called *Renegade*. But the project never made it out of development—there were problems with scheduling and "a domino effect of stuff," says Roberts. So Gibson went on to make

Lethal Weapon 3 with Silver and Donner, and Roberts finished up filming *Hook* and went on hiatus. But no one—from Roberts' and Gibson's agents to the stars themselves—forgot the concept of what seemed like a very good, if breathtakingly expensive, pairing.

Flash-forward to 1994, Seattle. While Donner watched Antonio Banderas and Sylvester Stallone chase each other up and down the set of *Assassins*, one of the film's screenwriters, Brian Helgeland, whispered the idea of a movie about conspiracies into the distracted director's ear. Donner remembers saying, in his a-shark-ate-my-vocal-cords baritone: "It'll make a good TV series, kid. Go do something."

With a check from Warner Bros., and with an image of Gibson as his off-balance hero, Helgeland settled in front of his computer to knock out what he calls a story "about a cabdriver who writes newsletters about conspiracies, and by accident, he gets one right."

By early last year, Donner had read the script and decided that far from being TV fodder, *Conspiracy Theory* was going to be his next movie. Gibson had seen the script as well, but, still distracted by the seven Academy Awards for *Braveheart*, he didn't pay much attention. While intrigued by the idea of reteaming with Donner and Silver, "I wasn't ready to roll on anything," says Gibson, who was making *Ransom*. "I thought, 'Oh, this is pretty good,' but I was staying greased and open." In the meantime, the script was flying through town, attracting the interest of such diverse stars as Jim Carrey and Brad Pitt.

When Gibson finished *Ransom*, he turned his attention to developing a remake of *Fahrenheit 451*. But Silver,

desperate for Gibson—"It was written for him," the producer says stubbornly—wasn't dissuaded. With Helgeland and Donner in tow, he stomped into Gibson's office on the Warner Bros. lot without an appointment.

"It was a little frightening. They

were looking at me like carnivores," Gibson recalls. "And Joel said he'd contemplated bringing over a set carpenter to nail the door shut until I said yes." After an hour and a half, "I found the situation so bizarre and funny that I said, 'Yeah, let's go.'"

A HANSOM PAIR: Gibson's cabdriver and Roberts' attorney "make one helluva cute couple," says Donner (directing them below)



2. 'CONSPIRACY THEORY' EXISTS BECAUSE

GWYNETH HAD A THING FOR BRAD, ROBIN HAD A THING FOR SEAN, AND WINONA HAD A THING FOR A LIENS:

Roberts was the costar of choice for all involved, but with Gibson on board for \$20 million

and Donner reportedly getting another \$5 million, Warner Bros. became squeamish about Roberts' \$12 million asking price. The script was sent to her anyway on the Chicago set of *My Best Friend's Wedding*, and after reading it in one evening, she expressed interest. "But of course, as soon as she did, they didn't have the money," says someone involved with the project. "I think in the beginning everyone wanted Julia, but it was, 'If only we can get Julia cheaper.'"

Silver set out to convince Warner Bros. co-CEO Terry Semel that Roberts was a solid investment, despite her recent track record. "I kept saying to Terry 'My Best Friend's Wedding is going to be a hit,'" Silver recalls. "It's such a strange, weird world we live in—I'm selling them on a TriStar movie so they'll put her in ours." Semel ultimately agreed, but by the time the studio got back to Roberts, "the bloom was off the rose," a source says,



and the exhausted actress announced that when she wrapped *My Best Friend's Wedding*, she was going on vacation.

With a start date set for October 1996, Silver had to find Gibson a costar, but he wasn't about to let go of Roberts. He began courting Roberts' agent, ICM's Elaine Goldsmith, as well as anybody connected with the actress (bottles of champagne mysteriously appeared on the desks of Roberts' assistants).

"To Joel's credit, no doesn't mean no, it means try harder," Goldsmith says. "Joel harassed me so much between work and home that one Sunday night my husband looked at me and said, 'Why hasn't Joel called today?'"

While Gibson placed a pleading call to Roberts' answering machine, other actresses came and went. According to a source close to the production, Gwyneth Paltrow expressed interest, then decided she'd rather make a movie (since shelved) with her father and accompany boyfriend Brad Pitt (also since shelved) to Argentina on the set of *Seven Years in Tibet*. So did Robin Wright, who then didn't want to go to New York on location, leaving husband Sean Penn and children behind in L.A. Winona Ryder agreed to play the part but was unable to get out of a commitment to make *Alien Resurrection*.

Finally, two weeks before filming was to begin, Roberts agreed to meet

Donner, Silver, and Gibson in a suite at New York's Sherry Netherland Hotel. "I had person anxiety, because they're all so close," Roberts says. "They have a rapport down, and there's a cadence to the way they exist with one another." Although the actress says she is "not one to be badgered," she was stunned to learn that Silver wouldn't let her leave the room without giving him a definitive answer.

"I had sympathy for her because she was, in essence, having the door nailed shut too," Gibson recalls. Roberts had just finished *My Best Friend's Wedding* the week before, and "the word was not to push her," Silver recalls, "just to talk to her. I said, 'I'm not going to do that.'"

After a brief meeting with the three men—during which, Roberts says, "they promised me the moon and that they would work around my nap time"—the actress excused herself to make a phone call in the bedroom. Opening the door, she stumbled upon a brass band hired by Silver. As they started blowing their trumpets, Roberts turned to see Gibson standing behind her with a lamp on his head.

The lunacy of the situation pushed her over the edge of doubt: "She called me and I could hear the brass band in the background," Goldsmith remembers. "And she said, 'It looks like I'm going to make a movie this fall.'"

3. 'CONSPIRACY THEORY' EXISTS BECAUSE

CAPTAIN PiCARD Has a THING for Smoked SaLmOn:

Meanwhile, up in Vancouver, Patrick Stewart received a call on the set of *Mastermind*

(a drama that will be released two weeks after *Conspiracy Theory*) asking him to return to L.A.; Donner wanted to discuss the supporting role of Dr. Jonas, a morally questionable CIA psychiatrist. The subsequent meeting in Donner's office was not what he'd expected. It lasted 45 minutes and not one word was mentioned about the part. "We talked about the weather, sports, and Canada," says Stewart, "everything but the movie."

Good topics, apparently. Stewart was offered the role immediately, although accepting it was, as he says, "a tough decision." In between *Mastermind* and a slew of other projects, Stewart had planned to take a few months off. "I was going to build a stone wall at my house in England," he says. What cemented his decision in favor of *Conspiracy* was a reported \$5 million paycheck and the knowledge that a Gibson-Roberts doubleheader was, as he puts it, "hardly going to end up in obscurity." (Also, Silver agreed to work around Stewart's *Christmas Carol* run in Los Angeles, and the producers of the actor's next two proj-

NAUGHTY OR NICE? Gibson's character may or may not be crazy—and may or may not be the target of Stewart's CIA shrink (far right)



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ects, PolyGram's *Dad Savage* and Hallmark's TV miniseries *Moby Dick*, each bumped their schedules back a week to accommodate *Conspiracy Theory*.)

From the first day of filming, Stewart felt that he'd made the right decision. "Not on any project have I come close to this level of dining," he says. "No one else has served me smoked salmon and capers first thing in the morning."

4. 'CONSPIRACY THEORY' EXISTS BECAUSE

MEMORIAL DAY, 1998, WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR 'LETHAL WEAPON 4':

Two months after the meeting with Stewart, the cast and crew have clustered inside a decrepit

building on the grounds of Los Angeles' V.A. Hospital. "This is not a Roger Corman movie," mutters a prop man. Dust mask in place, he moves gingerly about the wreckage, hauling a stained mattress down the hallway.

There's no need to look further than these uninhabitable rooms to see that this is one swank production: To achieve the rattrap look, 20 technicians stripped the walls, repainted them, and stripped them again; when the production is finished, the process will be repeated so the building looks the way it did pre-*Theory*.

But if it takes moola to make a mess, it takes even more to make it look just right. As two Warner Bros. executives nervously survey the scene, director of photography John Schwartzman (*The Rock*) is humming with pleasure. While a biased source insists the movie is budgeted at only \$70 million, not counting additional millions in marketing, Schwartzman has been given permission to use specially processed film, "a combination that is black and white and color," he says dreamily. "It's beautiful and expensive—about two times more than usual."



SILVER BELLE: Roberts found she couldn't say no to *Theory*'s notoriously persistent producer

Schwartzman estimates that 3,000 release prints of the movie will cost an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000.

Overseeing the expenditure of so much money isn't new to Donner—*Assassins* dished out the same kind of bucks to its stars—but the director still has moments of agita. "Not panic," he says, "but anxiety." The film will be following on the heels of *Air Force One*, an event movie that has both a big star (Harrison Ford) and rough-and-tumble action. "The studio trusted us with a tremendous amount of money, and my heart breaks if I can't deliver," Donner says. "That affects the next filmmaker's picture, and mine as well."

In fact, Donner's follow-up film is very much on everyone's mind. With *Lethal Weapon*'s star, director, and producer in one place again, few on the set believe that Silver will let the word *sequel* go unmentioned. If a constant reminder of the \$350 million franchise is needed, just look over at *Conspiracy Theory*'s video playback monitor, helmed by Marty Glover, Danny's brother. And one day, Danny himself paid a visit to the set, causing Roberts to ask, "What is this, *Lethal Weapon 4*?"

The press is asking the same question. During the last week in January, while *Conspiracy* is still shooting, *Variety* leaks an erroneous item that Donner and Gibson have agreed to a sequel that Helgeland will write. On the set, watching a scene in which Gibson is trying to drown Stewart, Helgeland is nonplussed. "That's the first I've heard of it," he says with a shrug. There's no doubt who might have been the overenthusiastic source: "There goes Joel," Donner says with a sigh and an eye roll.

But six months later, *Lethal Weapon 4* is indeed a go. Helgeland's not involved—he's preparing to direct the thriller *Parkes*, in which Gibson will star—but Silver, Donner, Glover, and Gibson will begin filming in January '98.

"It was in Mel somewhere," Donner says now. "But I didn't want to pressure him, and I didn't want to be pressured, either. Amazingly enough, Joel acted with a lot of discretion."

5. 'CONSPIRACY THEORY' EXISTS BECAUSE

OTHERWISE, THERE COULDN'T BE A SEQUEL:

On Feb. 7, the crew packed up their trailers and headed their separate ways. Unable to

resolve how the movie should end, Donner and friends filmed two different versions and left the final decision up to a test audience.

The vote weighed heavily toward the scenario that Donner feels is "less pure." But it's also the ending that, much to Helgeland's and Silver's delight, leaves the possibilities for a sequel wide open. Silver won't comment specifically but does acknowledge, "If I could find a way to make sequels without doing the first one, I'd do them all the time."

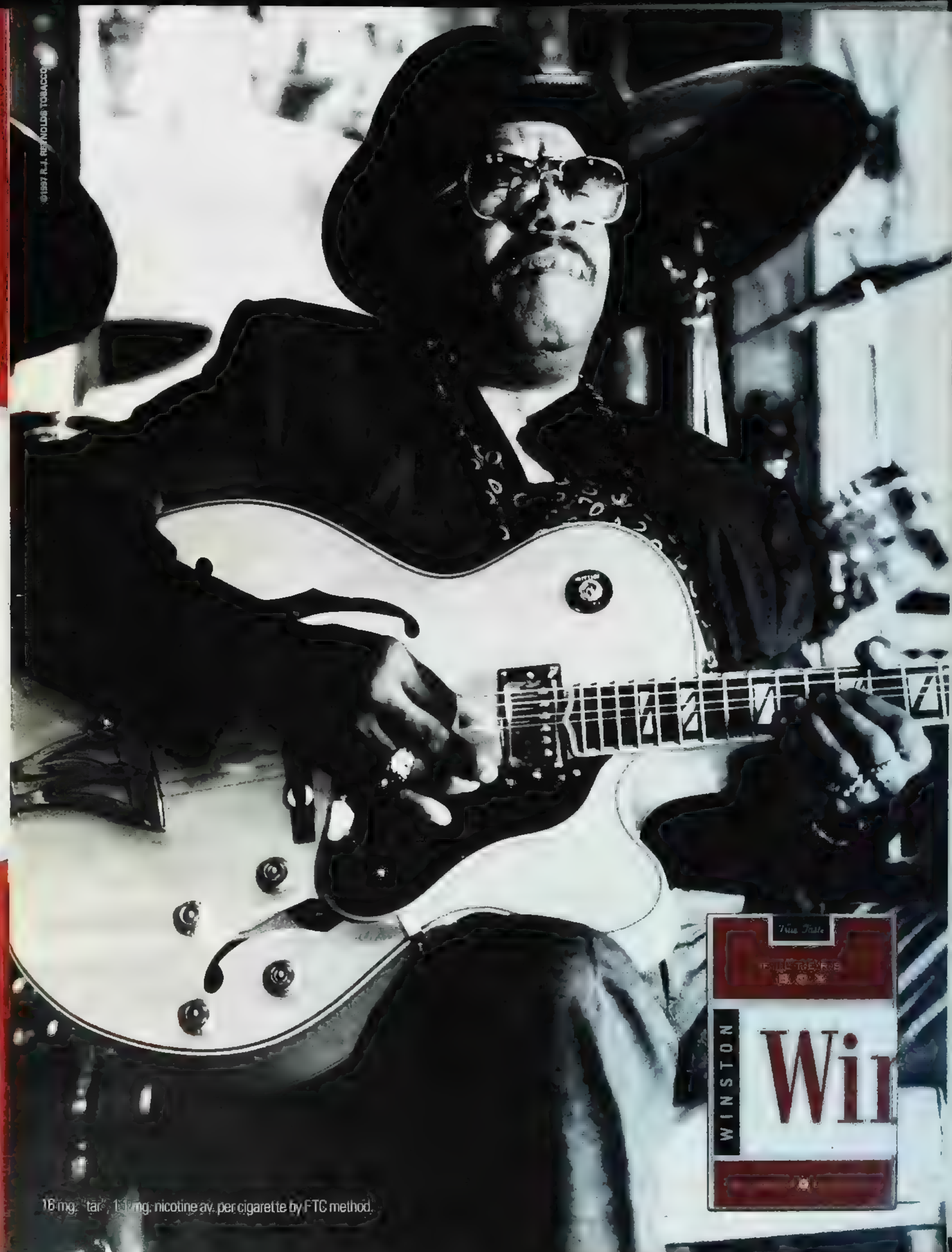
As for Roberts and Gibson, they're checking with their gardeners. ■

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ACROSS LOS ANGELES these days, in celebrity backyards and on studio lots, directors are shooting, stars are setting screens, and writers whose projects are in turnaround are hitting turnaround jumpers. Hollywood's got a basketball jones and the impact is being felt—on screen and off.

No matter that most recent basketball films—or films starring basketball players—have been as nightmarish as the New York Knicks' postseason (Disney's *Air Bud* took in a weak \$4.7 million on its opening weekend, and **Shaquille O'Neal's** *Kazaam* fouled out). Basketball is so prevalent in L.A. these days that if Nathanael West were still writing, he'd call his Hollywood novel *The Day of the Low Post*.

More important still, playing in one of the town's high-profile pickup games has replaced a stint in the William Morris mail room as a launching pad for aspiring Hollywood players.

Take this story of how filmmaker **Ross Marks**, 30, wound up directing a movie for Showtime. With a Sundance indie film to his credit (1995's *Homage*), Marks decided to court his film dreams after reading a magazine article about a writer whose performance in a weekly game hosted by director **Garry Marshall** led to a staff job on *Happy Days*. "I figured that was the key to my whole career," says Marks, tongue planted only partly in cheek.

Confident that if he could play like Magic Johnson's "show time" he might get a deal with a cable network like Showtime, Marks, a star guard in high school, wrangled an invitation to Marshall's Saturday-morning B-

BY JAY JENNINGS ball BOYS



BACKYARD BARON: Marshall, left, makes use of his home court advantage against actor Elizondo

ball fest. Three years and 100 layups later, he was asked by Marshall, who had seen and admired *Homage*, if he'd be interested in directing a script Marshall had just acquired called *The Twilight of the Golds*, about an expectant couple who learn their child will be gay. Another Saturday-morning player, Mark Harris, an agent-turned-producer, agreed to secure financing, and, next thing you know, the comedy drama aired on...Showtime.

STORIES LIKE THAT HAVE helped make Marshall's 25-year-old pickup game a magical event. Played every weekend in the San Fernando Valley, the game usually features a wide cast of friends and colleagues, including *Chicago Hope's* **Hector Elizondo**. Past participants have included **Robin Williams**, **Ron Howard**, and **Rob Reiner**.

Elsewhere in L.A., **Garry Shandling** holds court at his home, where **David Duchovny** has been known to dribble. In fact, it was during a hoops session that Duchovny pitched doing a stint on *The Larry Sanders Show* in which he would develop a crush on Larry. The *X-Files* star got an Emmy nomination for the episode.

And, whenever Chicago-based *Hoop Dreams* filmmakers **Steve James** and **Peter Gilbert** are in town for a meeting, "an executive says, 'We've got a game you've got to play in,'" says James.

Not all pickup games, however, are a fast break to important schmoozing. At NBC Entertainment president **Warren Littlefield's** Sunday-afternoon game in Santa Monica, business talk is out of bounds. That may be because the game started 15 years



AIR CLOONEY? During a break in filming *One Fine Day*, the *ER* star doesn't quite levitate like Air Jordan, but he gets the job done

ago as a mix of people in the entertainment industry—like producer **Joshua Brand** (*Northern Exposure*)—and execs from the nearby Rand corporation, who, with top secret government clearance, can't talk about their work. Littlefield recalls once asking a friend about a Rand player: "What does that guy do?" He said, "It's classified." I said, "Come on, what's he do?" He said, "He plots the bombing routes over Russia."

One of the few times that shop talk did intrude, it concerned a director's potential bombing route of his own. **Tom Shadyac**, a Littlefield game regular, excitedly reported that he'd been hired to direct a film about a "pet detective," starring a guy

named **Jim Carrey**. "We told him, 'You better get your money up front,'" Littlefield says. Shadyac's *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* went on to gross more than \$72 million at the box office and made Carrey a superstar.

On studio lots, Warner Bros. currently claims the hottest court, mostly because of **George Clooney's** fanaticism. The *ER* star's on-court injuries, including a twisted ankle that put him on crutches for part of the filming of *Batman & Robin*, haven't benched him for long. And when he is sidelined, he can turn to the *ER* roster for subs. Last year **Eriq La Salle** returned his love of the game into his directorial debut, HBO's *Rebound*, about New

Wanna score some points in Hollywood these days? Take it to the hoop!

York playground legend Earl "The Goat" Manigault.

Over at Paramount, basketball activity waned when **Gary David Goldberg** moved his Ubu Productions base of operations to New York for *Spin City*. While doing *Family Ties*, he held court on the Paramount lot at the unofficial "Ubu Memorial Arena." A third-team all-New York City player at Lafayette High in Brooklyn in the '60s, Goldberg (who's producing a biopic on NBA Hall of Famer **Connie Hawkins** for DreamWorks with *Hoop Dreams'* James and Gilbert) likes to use basketball for bonding among his writers and crew.

Like Goldberg, entertainment-industry B-ball devotees are generally transplants from the East Coast or basketball-crazed cities like Chicago. "Most of our group comes from the East," says Littlefield. "We grew up on the playgrounds, and basketball's our game of choice."

All this hoop hysteria, of course, is reflected on screen. Among the higher-profile upcoming B-ball projects: **Spike Lee's** *He Got Game*, starring **Denzel Washington**, and the movie version of *Venus to the*

Hoop, journalist Sara Corbett's just-published account of the 1996 Olympic gold-medal-winning U.S. women's basketball team, being developed by **Michelle Pfeiffer's** production company.

But considering its passion for the game, why hasn't Hollywood done a good basketball film? (With the exception, of course, of *White Men Can't Jump*.) "It's tough because everyone can tell if a guy can't shoot," says James. "It's hard to fake." Especially when faking is what your business is all about. ■

YES! NBC's big man Littlefield practices for TV's preseason





In his first leading role, Jerry Maguire's bad boy JAY MOHR makes good as *Picture Perfect*'s Mr. Nice Guy



ONCE MOHR WITH FEELING

BY DAVE KARGER

PERFECTLY MATCHED:
Opposite Aniston
and Bacon (right),
the comedy grad
proves himself
worthy competition

PHOTOGRAPH
BY WAYNE
STAMBLER

OW, DID JAY MOHR JUST SAY THE WRONG thing. Last year, he played Bob Sugar, the ruthless rival sports agent who showed Tom Cruise the pink slip in *Jerry Maguire*. Now he's trying to charm the pumps off Jennifer Aniston as sweetly smitten wedding cameraman Nick in *Picture Perfect*. Asked if each character represents an equal side of himself, Mohr responds, "There's probably more of me in Sugar than in Nick." And a whole nation heaves a sigh of disappointment.

"People are going to freak out after what a bastard I was in *Maguire* when they see how nice I am in *Picture Perfect*," says Mohr, 26, currently Kevin Bacon's competition for ad exec Aniston in *Perfect*. In fact, Nick, who willingly lets Aniston stomp on him in a variety of public places, is almost masochistically decent compared with the scheming Sugar. And Mohr, vaulting from naughty to nice, found his first true leading role a little frightening. "He was nervous," reports *Perfect* director Glenn Gordon Caron, a good shepherd to up-and-comers who guided an inexperienced Bruce Willis through four seasons of *Moonlighting*. "But he succeeds beyond everybody's expectations, including his own."

It's safe to say expectations for Mohr weren't that high back in suburban Verona, N.J., where he was a mostly unsuccessful class cutup with a comedic batting average even lower than his SATs. "I was more annoying than funny," admits Mohr, the third child of Jean, a nurse, and Jon, a marketing executive. "I wasn't the guy everyone liked. I was the guy that wouldn't shut up." His first brush with an appreciative audience occurred at a teen comedy night at a nearby stand-up club called Rascals, where the laughs came freely. Soon, Mohr was a traveling teen comic with two edicts from Mom: "Don't say the F-word, and no comedy on a school night." The gag orders were canceled after graduation when he began pursuing comedy full-time. In 1991, at age 20, Mohr landed a real job hosting MTV's mouthing-to-the-oldies game show, *Lip Service*.

Not that he's particularly keen on talking about his brief gig on the silly show. "Nah," Mohr retorts when asked for a quick reminiscence. "No reason. It's just something you did. Like picking someone up at the air-

port. You never say, 'Hey, remember six years ago, you picked your friends up at La Guardia?' It doesn't need to be talked about."

Regardless, it got other people talking. His season of *Service* led to a brief stint on *Saturday Night Live* (he joined the cast in 1993, at the same time as Norm Macdonald)—though that wasn't a write-home experience either: His two-year run included little airtime beyond the occasional Christopher Walken impression. "I think being on *Saturday Night Live* made me not be impressed by anything," Mohr figures. "All that waiting around for, like, a glimmer of stage time, just getting angry every week, trying to impress [SNL creator] Lorne [Michaels] and everybody... Always not getting your sketches on even though you know they're funnier than something Joe Schmo's doing, which isn't funny but he's got a movie coming out so they're going to put him on instead... It was just an oppressive, horrible, horrible place to be. I went to work feeling nauseous." (A spokesman for the show wouldn't comment.)

When SNL stalled during Mohr's contract renegotiations, he left the show unemployed—and undaunted. "I got my legs broken so much that I came out of there with so much moxie," he says. "Now every audition is like, I dare you to give this to someone more famous than me." Case in point: his high-pressure *Jerry Maguire* screen test opposite Cruise, which simulated their tense lunchtime firing scene. "What he did was he laughed at Tom Cruise," remembers *Maguire* writer-director Cameron Crowe, who was won over by Mohr's risky chutzpah. "Just laughed at him."

"I got off on that, man," says Mohr. "We just kept staring at each other. And Tom was staring at me like he was going to come across the table and beat the sh-- out of me. It literally must have been about 30 seconds, which was like the longest time—like, Normandy wasn't that long. And I remember the whole time in my mind

going, I have the next line. I hold the cards. Let me show them how *not* afraid of Tom Cruise I am."

In fact, Mohr made for such a memorable villain that some people can't imagine him as a movie hero. "I don't think he's the guy that you look at initially and say, 'Here's a leading man,'" says Caron. Though Caron pushed Mohr for *Perfect*, the execs at Fox weren't convinced either. "At the start of the [casting] process, I'd never even heard of him," Fox president of film production Tom Rothman says of



PLAYING THE FIELD: Before landing *Jerry Maguire* (Lip), Mohr paid *Lip Service* in '92

Mohr, who at that time was appearing as the Gomer Pyle-ish brother Wayne on *The Jeff Foxworthy Show*. To help Mohr's cause, Crowe put in calls to Rothman and the studio's chairman, Peter Chernin. "I just said, 'This guy is on fire,'" says Crowe. "He's bringing good work out of everybody. Talk to Tom Cruise—he'd tell you the same thing." As Rothman remembers it, "The gist was, 'You're crazy if you don't hire him.'"

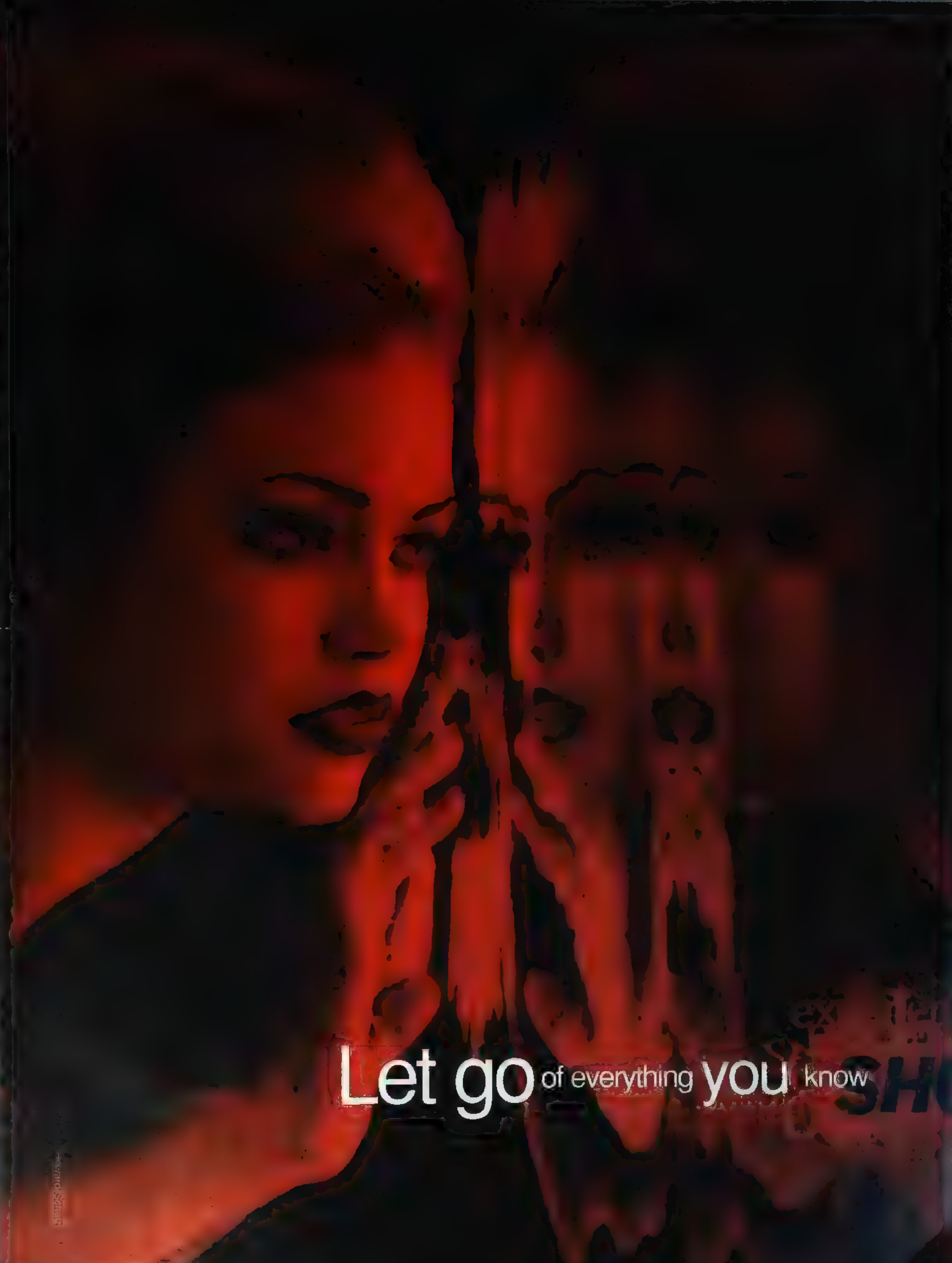
Even after getting the job, Mohr still felt the pressure of the competition. "The first day he came in he looked at Kevin Bacon and went, 'God, he's in great shape. I'd better go to the gym,'" says Caron. "And I said,

"That's not what this movie's about!" He also needed knuckle-rapping tutelage from his director on proper movie manners: Caron once hauled Mohr off the *Perfect* set and into a bathroom to bawl him out for goofing off. "I went, 'I'm sorry. Sometimes I can't help it. I'm a comedian,'" Mohr recalls. "And he screams, 'You're not a comedian! You're an actor!'"

"We just started screaming at each other," Caron concurs. "I said, 'I put my balls on the line for you! This is a f---ing movie! You're going to be the leading man, man! And you're going to blow it on bad deportment? Are you out of your f---ing mind?!' We just screamed and threatened each other the way guys do, and then we shook hands and went on with our work."

Mohr, who lives in L.A. with his girlfriend, actress Nicole Chamberlain, and rottweiler, Shirley, shows remarkably little of a typical comic's gregariousness—particularly when explaining that the tattoo on his inner left arm that says "Will 12-27" marks the date his cousin was killed by a drunk driver in 1995: "Two days after Christmas," he mumbles softly. The darker mood will emerge on screen when he follows *Picture Perfect* with January's *Suicide Kings*, a kidnapping drama that pits rich kid Mohr opposite a Mob boss played by, of all people, Christopher Walken. After they met, "I brought all the old tapes from [SNL]," says Mohr. "He loved it. He loves all impressions. I did an impression of Phil Hartman doing Kirk Douglas and he was on the floor. It wasn't even good!"

For now, Mohr is anxiously awaiting the response to his *Perfect* alter ego—and contemplating life as a possible Hollywood player. "A friend of mine asked, 'What's going to be your angle?'" he says. "I went, 'What do you mean?' He goes, 'Are you the new young actor with beard stubble and a cigarette?'" Mohr pauses and shrugs unapologetically. "You know what? I'm not Stephen Dorff. I'm the guy without an angle. And who knows? In September I might be a movie star." ■



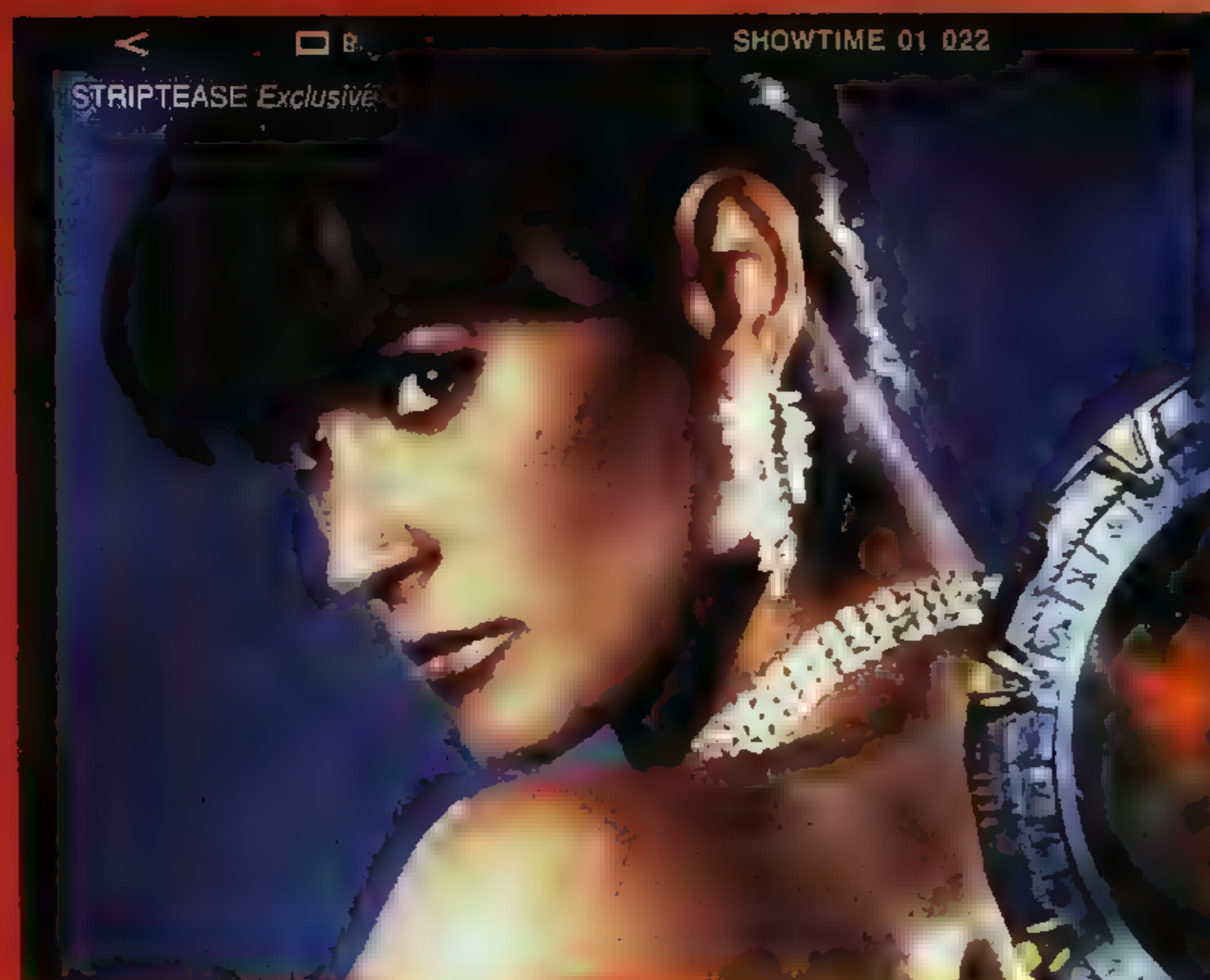
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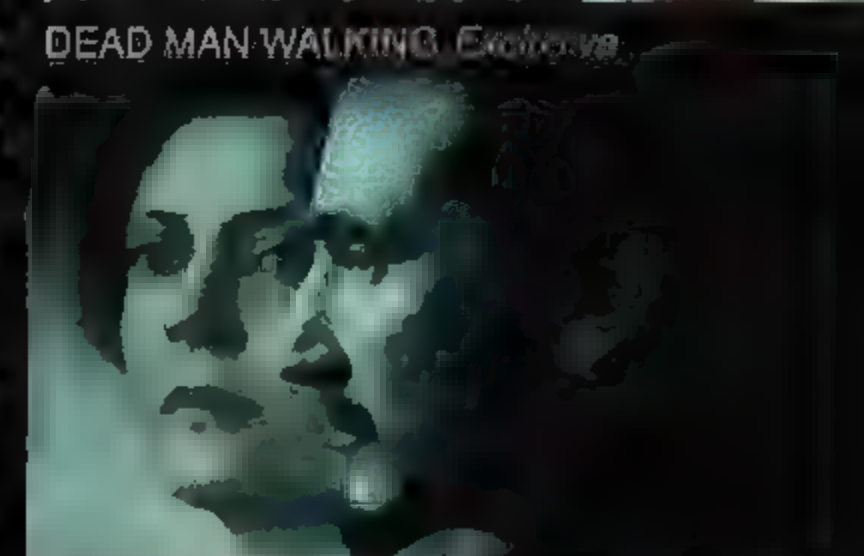
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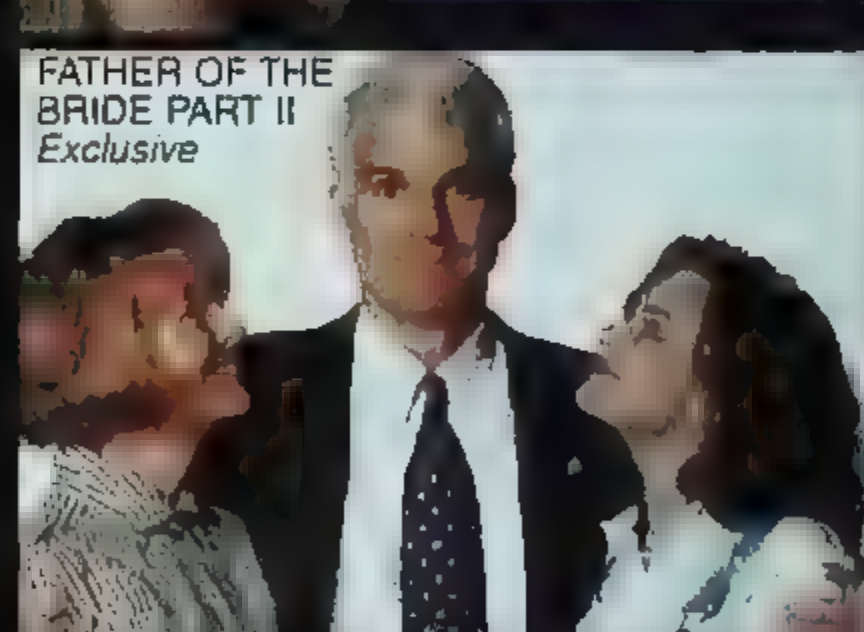
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IS SUMNER REDSTONE LOSING HIS



Blockbuster, MTV, and Paramount made Viacom one of the biggest entertainment companies in the world. A few years later, its stock is plummeting. Critics wonder if Redstone can juggle his brands back to health.

WHEN MEDIA TITANS GATHERED IN JULY for investment banker Herb Allen's annual bury-the-hatchet retreat in Sun Valley, Idaho, one honcho was conspicuous by his absence: Viacom Inc. chairman and CEO Sumner Redstone. ■ Odds are Redstone was making it a Blockbuster night. Not renting movies, mind you, but trying to figure his way out of the struggling video chain's multiple woes. Although much of Redstone's media house is in disrepair, it's Blockbuster Entertainment that has hurt Viacom's stock—and Redstone's cred-

BY JOE FLINT

GRIP?



LOSING THEIR WILL: Paramount execs' stinginess cost them Smith

ibility—the most: Last week, Viacom said it would write off \$323 million in the second quarter because of Blockbuster's troubles (see box on page 42).

The legendarily tenacious Sumner Redstone does not suffer failure gladly. A crafty negotiator and vociferous champion of lawsuits, he usually wins his battles, besting media Goliaths and misfortune alike. The oft-told tale of his survivalist *cojones* concerns a 1979 fire at Boston's Copley Plaza Hotel. As flames engulfed his room, Redstone supposedly hung by his fingertips from a window ledge until rescued. Actually, it's likely he stayed in the room. Either way, his burns were serious enough to threaten full recovery. Yet at 74, he continues to play a weekly—and fanatical—game of tennis.

"He portrays a grandfatherly image, but he has a viper's attitude," says one longtime associate of Redstone's baracuda-in-the-boardroom tactics. And part of Redstone's dilemma is that up until now, he's made it all look so easy. After turning his family's theater chain (National Amusements, Inc.) into a multi-billion-dollar operation, the Harvard-educated Bostonian achieved mogul

status with the 1987 purchase of Viacom, just as MTV and Nickelodeon were exploding. In 1993, concerned that Time Warner and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. were eclipsing Viacom in size and power, the fiercely competitive Redstone made a deal to buy Paramount Communications, beating Barry Diller in a bidding war. The \$10 billion purchase was closed thanks to Viacom's acquisition of cash-rich Blockbuster.

Once again, Redstone's timidity—the most: Last week, Viacom said it would write off \$323 million in the second quarter because of Blockbuster's troubles (see box on page 42). The synergistic opportunities were delicious: Paramount would produce hit movies; Blockbuster would rent out the videos. There was even talk of renaming Viacom's Showtime the Blockbuster Channel.

What a difference a few years makes. Blockbuster is now simply the most pressing in a laundry list of Viacom problems:

- Viacom juggernaut MTV has alienated viewers (ratings were off 20 percent in the second quarter) with its shift from music videos to original programming; signature shows are aging (*Singled Out*, *The Real World*) or soon to be gone (*Beavis and Butt-head*). More significant, the channel's key, trendsetting 18-to-24-year-old demographic appears to be getting younger, compromising its hip quotient and, thus, advertiser appeal.

- Paramount Pictures' box office is down, and critics blame the studio's slavish attention to the bottom line (read: *cheap*).

- UPN—the would-be network that Viacom owns with Chris-Craft Industries—lost about \$150 million last year. In addition, five major affiliates will soon shift to its rival, The WB,

ILLUSTRATION BY DAN ADEL



Marsha is frowning.

She eats too much chicken.
Chicken! Chicken! Chicken!
It is beginning to taste
Yucky!

Marsha tries to eat a fish,
but all she tastes is chicken!
Marsha sees an oxymoron at the grocery store.
Garden? Burger??
Marsha is adventurous.
Look at Marsha smile.
Perhaps she'll meet an orthodontist.

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now seen as the best contender to become the fifth network. Compounding the problem: UPN has yet to replace departing chairman and CEO Lucie Salhany.

■ Redstone is currently haggling with Universal over two cable channels the companies jointly own: USA Network and Sci-Fi Channel. Universal wants to buy, but it hasn't met Viacom's \$2 billion asking price. Why would Redstone give up two profitable channels? Have we mentioned Viacom's \$10.7 billion debt?

All of the above is reflected in Viacom's stock price, which in the last year has fallen 14 percent despite a rampaging bull market. "Management has lost considerable credibility with investors," said Merrill Lynch vice president Jessica Reif in a recent report on Viacom. Reif also warned that key Viacom execs, who are compensated largely through stock options, might start to look elsewhere.

Those execs have their own spin: Sure, Blockbuster's in a slump, but fresh management, new headquarters that will centralize operations, and revolutionary technology (allowing stores to cater to the needs of individual neighborhoods) will invigorate the chain. MTV's ratings may be slipping, but MTV Networks (including VH1 and Nickelodeon) is still a moneymaker, with second-quarter revenues of \$334 million and cash flow of \$127 million—double-digit increases over last year. The publishing division, Simon & Schuster, remains solid, and Viacom's TV arm is thriving: Besides 13 shows on the broadcast nets' fall schedules, rerun sales of *Frasier* will bring the

FACE-OFF: In '92, Biondi (left) was Redstone's No. 2; now Universal Studios' chairman/CEO, he's battling Redstone for two cable channels

conglomerate several hundred million dollars over the next few years. And while Paramount Pictures might be down from a year ago, who really measures market share anymore? After all, says Paramount, the bulk of its product makes money (*Face/Off*, *Breakdown*), and there have been few real bombs (*Til There Was You*, *The Beautician and the Beast*).

Nevertheless, Wall Street's perception—often more persuasive, as we know, than reality—is not one of good health. And many point to one critical moment—the seemingly cavalier firing of Redstone's well-regarded president and CEO, Frank Biondi, in January of 1996—as the catalyst.

REDSTONE WITHOUT BIONDI, said wags, was like Beavis without Butt-head. The duo had worked together for nine years, with cool-headed Biondi serving as the perfect foil for the more emotional Redstone. "If Frank could get 80 percent of what he wanted, he'd move on. Sumner will spend his time trying to get the other 20 percent," says a former Viacom exec who worked with both.

Biondi, who had long stints

at HBO and Coca-Cola, was brought on by Redstone after he acquired Viacom in 1987. He oversaw the day-to-day operations, freeing Redstone to play dealmaker. But when the company lost some key executives, including Nickelodeon architect Gerry Laybourne to Disney/ABC, Redstone tired of Biondi's low-key management style. Viacom, Redstone said at the time, needed to become "more nimble and aggressive" as well as to "streamline [its] decision-making process."

The power play was written off as a case of Rupertitis—Redstone's desire to run Viacom in the same he-man, hands-on style Murdoch employs. Now the owner of 28 percent of Viacom and 67 percent of its voting stock is taking a bath along with his other investors.

Redstone's weakness, say former colleagues and Wall Street, is that he is an acquirer, not an operator—an opinion that, in some ways, is unfair. A renowned workaholic, Redstone still calls his theaters every weekend to check on box office. Furthermore, the task of integrating an empire that includes movies, TV, video, and cable at a time of

intense competition would prove daunting to any one person (save, perhaps, Rupert Murdoch). "I don't think Sumner realized the challenge of bringing Paramount, Blockbuster, and Viacom together," says one Viacom exec. "He moved to consolidate the company much faster than, say, Time with Warner Bros., [but because its business is essentially retail] Blockbuster is not integratable that way."

After Biondi was ousted, Redstone tapped longtime Viacom executives Philippe Dauman (general counsel) and Thomas Dooley (executive VP of finance) to become deputy chairmen. While both are held in high regard, neither has Biondi's operating experience. "Philippe and Tom are smart," says a former colleague of both, but "their life right now is hell" thanks to battles with Wall Street. Dooley acknowledges the dilemma. "The perception of Blockbuster overwhelming us is a significant frustration. The only way to change that is to turn Blockbuster around. We are in the 'show me' mode."

Admittedly, many of Viacom's current problems would be there even if Biondi had remained on board. The 16-year-old MTV, for example, would still be suffering growing pains. "We're trying to do a better job," says MTV Networks chairman and CEO Tom Freston, who promises that the network will "restate its commitment as the channel of music and popular culture." By contrast, VH1, barely breathing a few years ago, is enjoying a boom, with ratings increases that Freston puts in the neighborhood of 30 percent for the second

quarter. The music channel was paid the highest compliment when MTV ripped off its *Pop-Up Video*. "VH1 is becoming relevant," Freston says, almost in amazement.

There's more reason for optimism: While News Corp. and Disney are aggressively developing rival cable channels, Nickelodeon continues to dominate the kids front (analysts Paul Kagan Associates project revenues north of \$600 million in 1997). And Nick's second theatrical release, *Good Burger*, made for less than \$10 million, earned \$14.1 million in its first two weeks.

But *Burger's* minuscule budget points to part of Viacom's predicament: Redstone is a notoriously frugal man. While shoestring budgets might work at Nick and MTV, the same tactic may not fly at Paramount Pictures. Earlier this year, the studio lost A-lister Will Smith as a costar for Nicolas Cage in the upcoming *Snake Eyes* because it was only willing to pay him \$10 million—just \$2 million short of his asking price.

That same austerity extends to production costs. Paramount has joined other studios in the partnering trend as a way to minimize risk. The studio looks smart in its deal with Fox for the way-over-budget *Titanic*: Paramount's exposure on the disaster flick is limited to about \$65 million, which it should easily recoup. But Paramount is hedging bets even on relatively inexpensive films. *Face/Off*, for example, which cost roughly \$80 million to make (a mid-range figure for action movies), is a partnership with Disney. The logic at the time was that Cage was an

unproven action star (the deal was done before *The Rock* was a hit). Okay, but then why cut a similar deal with Disney on Cage's upcoming film, the aforementioned *Snake Eyes*, now that he's an established draw? Plus, with *Face/Off* making a bundle, Paramount must share profits with a competitor.

Dooley justifies the caution by pointing out that most studios do business this way: "Wall Street will eventually recognize the wisdom of reducing the downside risk in a volatile business." Wall Street is not convinced. "It's the chicken strategy," says Cowen & Co. analyst Hal Vogel. "If you have faith in a project, take the risk."

VIACOM IS A SIGNIFICANT distance from death's door. But the Blockbuster meltdown in particular needs a quick fix, which Redstone would certainly appreciate: As Viacom's biggest shareholder, he's seen his holdings drop in value by \$1 billion this year. A spin-off would be welcomed by investors, but the tax consequences could bring on bigger headaches than Viacom currently faces.

If it were up to Wall Street, Viacom would get a new Biondi. But analysts would do well not to hold their breath: "In the last conference call, [Redstone] made it very clear that he was the CEO and chairman," says Sanford C. Bernstein analyst Tom Wolzien.

Still, as one Viacom board member points out, "you don't get to be a billionaire without taking risks." People have bet against Redstone before, and as history shows, he's a champion at hanging on. ■



RENT STABILIZATION? Viacom hopes that new CEO Antiocho (right) can save the chain

BLOCKBUSTED!

WOULD THAT THEY HAD a rewind button at Blockbuster Entertainment. Recently likened in an industry report to a "gangrenous limb" of the Viacom empire, the division is now valued at about a quarter of the \$8.4 billion the company paid for it in 1994. Worse, cash flow for the second quarter of 1997 fell a mind-boggling 68 percent, to \$46 million.

What went wrong? A combination, it seems, of bad luck and chowderheaded management decisions. "Blockbuster has been absolutely incompetent in the last year and a half," says Bob Alexander, of NYC-based marketing consulting group Alexander & Associates, summing up the opinion of many industry analysts (Blockbuster execs wouldn't comment for this article). A look at the scorecard reveals: A REVOLVING CEO DOOR After the amicable 1996 departure of Steven R. Berrard, who learned the business under former Blockbuster owner H. Wayne Huizenga, Redstone tapped Wal-Mart topper Bill Fields. Fields left this past April and was replaced in June by Taco Bell's John Antiocho. Wall Street likes Antiocho, but getting people to rent *The Cable Guy* is not the same as selling them a burrito. "Who since [Berrard] has had a strong connection to the movie business?" asks Alexander. "Who understands the product?"

A NEW HEADQUARTERS Shifting a company's home base from Fort Lauderdale to Dallas shouldn't hamstring operations—unless two thirds of your employees don't follow.

A NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTER Fields' decision to build a high-tech shipping plant north of Dallas "will save tens of millions of dollars," says David Doft, VP and media analyst for Furman Selz LLC. But until it opens in 1998, Blockbuster employees are hand-wrapping orders. Reportedly, tapes

are reaching stores late, and a lot of inventory is, uh, falling off the truck. OVERDIVERSIFICATION Under Fields, Blockbuster wasted capital opening—then closing—a string of failed music stores, and revamped its video stores as "entertainment destinations," stocking shelves with T-shirts, plush toys, CDs, and junk food. Why no one remembered that this last tactic hadn't worked when Huizenga tried it in the early '90s remains a mystery.

IT'S BEEN A LOUSY YEAR FOR VIDEO According to VidTrac, rentals were down 8 percent during the first half of '97 compared with the same period last year. The chief culprit: Movie studios released most of their big '96 movies to tape last Christmas instead of waiting for the new year, leaving video stores with little to proffer come '97. Still, some chains are showing increases, so when you consider that one out of four video stores in America is a Blockbuster, it may be that Viacom's albatross is dragging down total industry performance.

NO PORN The policy that enabled Blockbuster to carve out a pro-family image has also crimped the bottom line. Adult tapes cost less to buy and can account for as much as 30 percent of a store's earnings. If Antiocho decided to pull a 180 on this policy, he'd face a firestorm of negative publicity. But Wall Street might not mind. "How big a fallout would there be?" asks Doft. "Most everyone does it."

In any event, it's clear that Antiocho has to do something if he wants to keep Blockbuster from being an answer on a 21st-century Trivial Pursuit card. A decade ago, the company was on its way to becoming the Coca-Cola of video chains. In 1997, the only growth potential is in ulcers for Sumner Redstone. —Ty Burr

The Captain was here

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REVIEWS

A CRITICAL LOOK AT THIS WEEK IN ENTERTAINMENT



Cop Land
STARRING
Sylvester
Stallone
Robert
De Niro
RATED R
110 MINUTES

A Sly Move?

Sylvester Stallone seeks to rediscover himself as an actor in *Cop Land*, a small-town crime drama with epic aspirations. **by Owen Gleiberman**

IN JAMES MANGOLD'S *Cop Land* (Miramax), Sylvester Stallone tries to fill in the shadow of his former self. Stallone put on 40 pounds to

play Freddy Heflin, a sweet, droopy, slow-witted naif who's the sheriff of Garrison, N.J., despite the fact that Freddy commands all the au-

thority of a traffic cop. Stallone's cheeks are ruddy and lopsided, and his hair is a greasy, unkempt mop; his thick-waisted middle is a

shock to behold. Yet what's harder to adjust to than the flesh he's added is what he's lost: the implacable action-hunk attitude—the burning eyes and steel-set jaw he has worn like a demigod's armor ever since the mid-'80s. Stripped of his armor, can the celebrity warrior still act—that is, can he radiate emotions on a human scale?

Stallone gives a modest, likable performance in *Cop Land*. Playing a character meant to evoke memories of the hapless, primitive-yet-tender Rocky Balboa, he seems even more of an innocent simpleton than Rocky was (the

Italian Stallion, you'll recall, worked as a collections agent for a loan shark). He's like a crustacean who's escaped his shell and now stands melting in the sun. Stallone does a solid, occasionally winning job of going through the motions of shedding his stardom, but the wattage of his personality is turned way down—at times, it's turned down to neutral. And that pretty much describes *Cop Land*, too. Dense, meandering, ambitious yet jarringly pulpy, this tale of big-city corruption in small-town America has competence without mood or power—a design but not a vision.

When he was a teenager, Freddy dived into a lake to rescue a girl who'd plunged off a bridge. In saving her, he lost his hearing in one ear, and with it his chance of becoming

a true, hardcore street cop. Now, as sheriff, he roams the town performing good deeds, friendly yet defeated, a guy with a uniform but without the respect that goes with it. For Garrison is a town colonized by real cops. A tough, close-knit group of New York City officers have carved out a suburban enclave for themselves and their families there, safely across the river from the jungle. No wonder Freddy is a joke. What's he protecting them from? (Only someone with a death wish would be a crook in Garrison.) It all sounds very upright and American—the Wild East tamed by its own citizen-lawmen—except that this police-family paradise is built on a false bottom. Ray Donlan (Harvey Keitel), a veteran officer, spearheaded the transformation of Garrison into "Cop Land" by making a pact with the mob. The houses were bought with dirty money, and now the cops share a cult of corruption.

Mangold's only other film, the indie oddity *Heavy* (1996), was about a fat, monosyllabic pizza chef, and *Cop Land*, too, is the story of a man who stares at life. It's easy to see why Mangold identifies with these recessive, squishy-hearted losers: There's something naggingly passive about his own filmmaking style, with its functional camera setups, its blandly lit, bare-bones atmosphere. *Cop Land* is ungainly to look at, and so, in its way, is its dense, "sprawling" conspiracy plot, a series of ill-fitting puzzle pieces we're forced to jam together in our heads. Murray (Michael Rapaport), Ray's young cop nephew, unintentionally kills two black teenagers who sideswipe him during a

REELWORLD

THIS WEEK IN HOLLYWOOD

■ **SIGNING THE CAST** Now that Goldie-Hawn and Madonna are set to play the merry murderesses in the movie version of the musical *Chicago*, here's an update on their leading men: John Travolta has hinted that he'd take the role of the dashing, dancing lawyer who tries to spring them from the slammer, though his representatives say he's not involved. (He's also expressed interest in the long-in-the-works film version of *The Phantom of the Opera*.) The second male lead—a two-bit, two-timed husband—could go to Joel Grey (*Cabaret*), now appearing in the hit revival of *Chicago* on Broadway, though last week at a Hollywood Bowl event Nathan Lane (*The Birdcage*) offered up an informal audition of his own, performing the character's signature song, "Mr. Cellophane." For the role of director, speculation has starred *Steel Dawn*'s Herbert Ross, *Seven*'s David Fincher (who has directed Madonna before in music-video form), and Nicholas Hytner (*The Madness of King George*). Miramax Films plans to begin shooting next year. —Gregg Kilday

■ **PLAY GIRL** Meryl Streep apparently had a very good time bringing Scott McPherson's *Marvin's Room* to the screen, because she's now signed to do two more screen adaptations of plays. This summer she begins filming the screen version of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*, about an extended family of poor Irish (accent alert) women, and next summer she'll join Glenn Close in an adaptation of Friedrich von Schiller's 16th-

MUSICAL MAN? Travolta

will not be eaten by a dingo in the film.

■ **STONE CODE** Director Scott Kalvert (*The Basketball Diaries*) remains mum on his abrupt departure from Sharon Stone's remake of John Cassavetes' 1980 tough-gal thriller *Gloria* ("creative differences" is all his agent will allow). However, Kalvert's replacement, Sidney Lumet—who led Stone's friend Faye Dunaway to an Oscar in *Network* and who will begin shooting *Gloria* in New York in

October—is already getting two thumbs up from the star. "It was always a dream of mine to work with Sidney Lumet," says Stone. "So much so that it became a code between me and my friends. They would ask, 'How'd it go?' and I'd say, 'No Sidney today.'" As they say in Hollywood: When Sharon Stone's happy, nobody gets hurt. —Chris Nashawaty

■ **FURTHERMORE** Movie script doctor extraordinaire Carrie Fisher will be spending more time on TV; she just signed to create new shows for Universal's small-screen division.... *The English Patient* has made \$225 million, Miramax Films' largest worldwide gross to date...and judging from overseas box office reports, the French are keen on *Speed 2: Cruise Control*.



STONE



joyride, and fear of a racial incident leads Ray to fake Murray's suicide off the George Washington Bridge. (It takes a leap of faith just to go with that premise.) But Ray's old nemesis, a hard-headed Internal Affairs investigator named Moe Tilden (Robert De Niro), smells a cover-up. When the Garrison cops try to make good on their ruse by killing Murray off, the plan backfires—and Freddy learns that Murray is still alive. Can the straw-man sheriff possibly restore justice?

Mangold certainly knew what he was doing when he cast Keitel and De Niro. As Ray, Keitel plays expertly in his wired-into-hostility mode, and De Niro, terse and funny, makes Moe an arresting contradiction—a firecracker bureaucrat gnarled by cynicism.

You're grateful for the way these two jack up the energy of their scenes. The other performers are trapped in roles that are like boxes built from clichés. When Annabella Sciorra, as the now-married woman Stallone saved from drowning, cradles his big, shaggy head, we know that it's meant to tug our heartstrings—and therefore it doesn't. Ray Liotta, as a tormented good-bad officer, does lots of showy huffing and puffing before we have any idea of why his loyalties are torn. As for Stallone, he comes fully alive only in the powerfully staged climax, when he finally gets to pick up a gun. It's a fitting showpiece for a performer who, despite his best efforts, never looks truly comfortable out of the action. **B-**

Burnt Offering

Drawing from every superhero around, *Spawn* is a comic-book hodgepodge with visual pow to spare

MOVIES AND COMIC BOOKS have borrowed from each other so incestuously for so long now that when you see *Spawn* (New Line), what you're real-

ly watching is a movie based on a comic book based on movies derived from other comic books. The hero, a black CIA assassin, is

Spawn
STARRING
Michael Jai
White
John
Leguizamo
RATED PG-13
87 MINUTES

killed by an explosion inside a biological weapons plant and returns from the dead as Spawn (Michael Jai White), a scarred avenger who has made a pact with the devil to lead the armies of hell (or something like that). His body melted into a mass of charred sinew, Spawn, the freak underdog with spiky weapons bursting out of his skin, is Spider-Man, Batman, Darkman, RoboCop, the Crow, the Phantom of the Opera, and the English Patient rolled into one. Todd McFarlane, who created the *Spawn* comic books five years ago, has already spawned a pop empire. *Spawn* doesn't make a lot of sense, but the imagery whooshes by in glitzy psychedelic torrents. As with some of the loonier *Nightmare on Elm Street* se-

SPHERE NOT: White's maimed crusader is soft at the core

X-RATED MOVIE MONIKERS

A PORNY ISSUE

FROM THE Trends We Miss department: A few years ago, the adult-video industry parodied Hollywood movie titles with frequent aplomb (*Hannah Does Her Sisters*, *In and Out of Africa*). But a recent search through our local X-rated section yielded only one new spoof: *Dante's D---*. "The trend does seem to be waning," says Mark Kernes, features editor for *Adult Video News*. One reason: the 1992 *Splatman*, a *Batman* homage complete with superheroes in black rubber outfits. Warner Bros. filed suit against *Splatman*'s distributor, Hip Video, thereby, according to Kernes, making other distributors more aware of the complicated legal issues separating parody and copyright infringement. According to Kernes, "*Dante's D---* doesn't have a volcano in it." —Benjamin Svetkey



quels, the film gives you the pleasurable junky sensation of living inside an apocalyptic videogame.

Encased in organic body armor, which makes him look like a heavy metal bug, Spawn gets hurled down cosmic light tunnels and sits brooding atop Gothic spires, surrounded by a swirling cape of flame. Comic-book myths like *Spawn* are really projections of adolescent self-pity (which is why it's a little scary that so many 30-year-olds are into them). Fortunately, whenever things threaten to get too "dark," John Leguizamo shows up as Clown, a stinky-puff demon who's like Humpty Dumpty played by Divine. Leguizamo devours a slice of pizza covered in maggots, but mostly he chews on his awful puns with the spit-spewing glee of a 6-year-old impersonating a mad scientist. It takes a special shamelessness to have this much fun acting this disgusting. **B-** —CG

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BEDPAN ALLEY:
Roberts nurses a
delusional Gibson

Fare Game

As a New York cabbie driven by paranoia, Mel Gibson gets a lift from Julia Roberts in *Conspiracy Theory*

IN *Conspiracy Theory* (Warner Bros.), Mel Gibson plays a New York City cabdriver named Jerry Fletcher for whom a car radio

tuned to the rantings of Howard Stern is superfluous. Jerry is a geyser of paranoid political fantasies, and no passenger is safe from his ruminations about what They are doing to Us. Jerry sees plots and auguries of no good in everything from the death of Jerry Garcia to the success of Oliver Stone (well, who doesn't?), and as he drives around town, he delivers his pensées with the intensity of a downtown poet.

Of course, Jerry also happens to be right. *They* are indeed out to get Us and, in particular, Jerry, who has flashbacks and premonitions of danger. Then some guys, led by a creepy psychiatrist played by Patrick Stewart, almost kill him, which is compelling evidence of trouble. Except that it takes a good

Conspiracy Theory
STARRING
Mel Gibson
Julia Roberts
RATED R
125 MINUTES

long time before Jerry is able to convince Alice Sutton, a brave and lovely Justice Department lawyer, that she really should help him. Fortunately, Alice is

played by Julia Roberts, so you know she will, and does, and the two proceed to outwit

That way you're set up for when director Richard Donner—who worked with Gibson on all three audience-pleasing *Weapons*—switches the movie from a really interesting, jittery, literate, and witty tone poem about justified contemporary paranoia (and the creatively unhinged dark side of New York City) to an overloaded, meandering iteration of a *Lethal Weapon* project that bears the not-so-secret stamp of audience testing and tinkering.

How else to explain the

the evil master-minds bent on world domination.

At least, that's what They at Warner Bros. want you to think. In fact, *Conspiracy Theory* is a plot to make you buy the idea of attractive *Lethal Weapon* star Mel Gibson as a cabbie ("Where to, pal?" he asks a passenger much too politely to make it in NYC).

transformation of Gibson—about the only Hollywood powerhouse around capable of letting himself go so unvainly loose and *nuts*—from compelling eccentric to love-inspired hero? How else to explain the ridiculously fuzzy contours of Julia Roberts' Alice, a character so underdeveloped that the actress (who, nevertheless, gives it a good shot, only adding to her plus column this summer following the success of *My Best Friend's Wedding*) has nothing much to do except beam, scream, and team?

In the first half of *Conspiracy Theory* (written with verve by Brian Helgeland, who also did wonders on the upcoming *L.A. Confidential*), production designer Paul Sylbert and cinematographer John Schwartzman give New York a crazed look of *Watch your back!* In the second half, when They take over, sense of place falls away so precipitously that the last sight we see is Roberts beaming as she rides a horsey in the country. Why? Ask Oliver Stone.

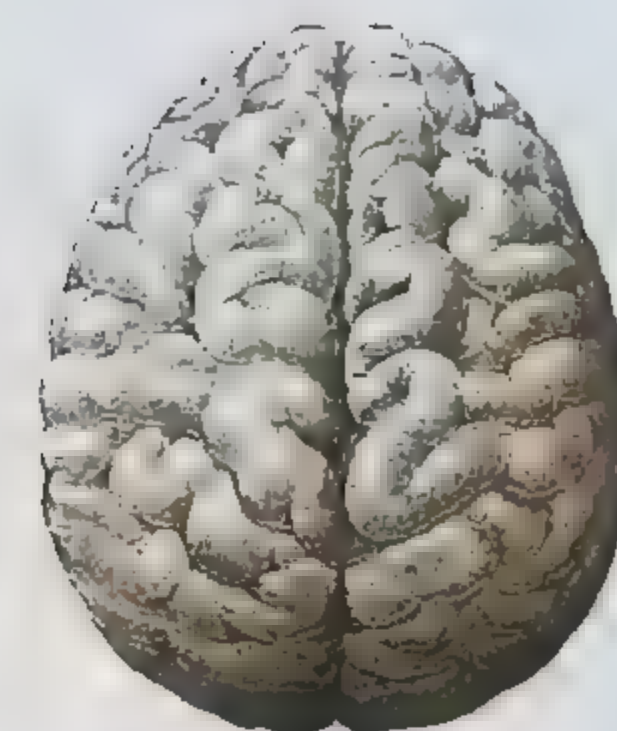
B- —Lisa Schwarzbaum

CRITICAL MASS

Here's how a sampling of critics and movie audiences from across the country grade 10 current releases.

		CINEMASCOPE Audience Score: 10 U.S.	ROGER EBERT Chicago Tribune	GENE SISKEL Savoy & East	JAMI BERNARD Savoy Movie Systems	CARLIE RICKEY Los Angeles Sentinel	MIKE CLARK USA Today	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	AVERAGE*
Air Force One	COLUMBIA	A	C+	B	B+	—	B	A	B
Career Girls	OCTOBER	—	B	B+	A-	—	C	B+	B
Conspiracy Theory	WARNER BROS.	—	C+	B-	—	—	B-	B-	B-
George of the Jungle	WALT DISNEY	B+	B-	B-	B-	C-	D	B	C+
In the Company of Men	SONY PICTURES CLASSICS	—	A	B+	B+	—	B	A	A-
Mrs. Brown	MIRAMAX	—	A	A	B+	—	B+	C+	B+
187	WARNER BROS.	C+	C	B	C+	—	B	C-	C+
Picture Perfect	20TH CENTURY FOX	B-	C	B	B-	—	C+	B	B-
Shall We Dance?	MIRAMAX	—	B+	B	B	A	B-	B+	B+
Spawn	NEW LINE	C+	B+	C	—	—	D-	B-	C+

*AVERAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE CINEMASCOPE.



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These are only a few of the services that you'll find on DIRECTV.

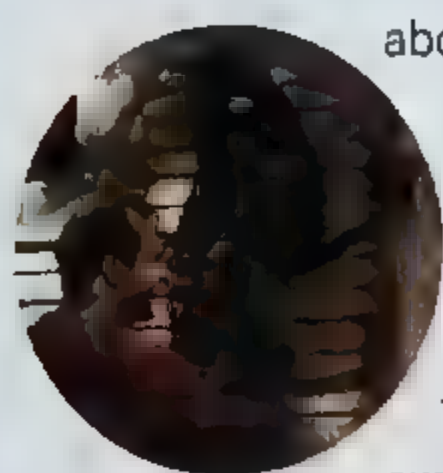
the DSS system has always been fully compatible with your local channels. Most DSS owners receive them by using either an indoor or outdoor antenna and switch to their local channels by clicking the remote control.



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Q. I still want to watch my local channels. Is that a problem if I have the DSS system?

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Q. Can I watch USSB and DIRECTV on more than one TV set?

A. Yes. You can run an additional line from the receiver to your other TVs. To watch different satellite channels on different TVs, simply add an additional DSS receiver as you would with a second VCR. And you can do so when you buy the dish or at a later date.

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Script Tease Artist

EW offers an open letter of advice to Tom Cruise, whose jillion-dollar smile has him faced with a jillion choices. by David Hochman

TO: Tom Cruise
FROM: People Who Care

SINCE YOU ARE, AFTER ALL, THE MOST POPULAR actor on the planet, it's not surprising that your name's been popping up a lot lately. We've perused the press and noticed no fewer than 14 projects to which you are reportedly attached as the star (plus others that you're just producing). Seems everybody wants you, big fella, but as you're weighing your options, remember this: The stakes are high.

You scored an Oscar nomination for your last release, *Jerry Maguire*, and you really impressed us by teaming with the elusive Stanley "Did Somebody Say, Take 47?" Kubrick in the nearly completed Warner Bros. thriller *Eyes Wide Shut*. Your résumé is really pumped up, and you want to keep it buff. Herewith is our advice.

First of all, about these movies you're only producing—like *Without Limits*, about the champion runner Steve Prefontaine (starring Billy Crudup) being released next spring: *Just stop it right there*. You can sit around and spend money in a few years when you're wrinkled. Now, about your next acting job: Since Kubrick's perfectionism stretched the *Eyes Wide Shut* shoot to nearly a year, think twice before you sign up for that proposed *Mission: Impossible* sequel with that other high-maintenance director, Oliver Stone. But there's also talk that you and Stone are kicking around *Alexander the Great*, which actually sounds promising. You would look fine in ermine, and biopics are hot right now. If they can take Larry Flynt to the Oscars, imagine how far you could go with a subject who didn't use pink as a dirty word.

Speaking of bios, we hear you also may do *Houdini* with director Paul Verhoeven, who's also pretty intense (did you see *Basic Instinct*?), and you've already done the sleight-of-hand thing in *Cocktail*. Why not go ahead instead with Universal's



untitled Phil Spector story, about that legendary 1960's rock & roll record producer? It's got it all: chicks, music, retro outfits. And your *Jerry Maguire* bud Cameron Crowe might direct. You guys complete each other.

Of course, Crowe's not the only director in town. John Woo—Mr. Two-Fisted Slow-Mo Gunfight, hot off of *Face/Off*—wants you to play this white guy who goes to China in the 19th century to crush a rebellion. It's a Paramount movie called *The Devil Soldier*. Plus, it might be fun to hang out in another country for a while, but if they even think about making you do it with an accent, say you've got two words for them: *Far and Away*.

Then there's Buena Vista's *Air Reno*, about a world-class pilot who trains a young female flier. Could be sexy, and Rid-

ley Scott (*Alien*) may direct. You've also been mentioned to star in *Earth, Wings and Fire*, about the World War II Flying Tigers, and in the *Blue Light of African Dreams*, about the first attempt to fly across the Atlantic. They all seem legit, but haven't you done enough airplane movies already? You're Tom Cruise, not Julie Hagerty.

Another Paramount movie, *The Mark*, about a superhero who receives his powers from a magical tattoo, looks too kooky. Save yourself the hassle. Get a temporary "Nicole Forever" heart on your arm instead. If you want to go a little kooky, well, all right. *Timejumpers*, about a pair of time-traveling federal agents, seems pretty cool, but it's also got Emilio Estevez attached. If you wanna do a buddy pic, we have one suggestion: Find out what Will Smith's up to. ■

The Week

Reviews by OWEN GLEIBERMAN, LISA SCHWARZBAUM, and TY BURR

New Releases

LOVE SERENADE (Miramax, R) Ken Sherry (George Shevtsov), the monumentally laid-back fish-out-of-water DJ at the center of writer-director Shirley Barrett's lightweight Aussie fable, could be the official poster boy for '70s nostalgia. Tall and beanpole skinny, his leathery, sunken-cheeked mug dominated by a hooked nose that makes him look like Barry Manilow's rat-faced uncle, Ken the aging hipster shows up in the underpopulated nowhere-ville of Sunray armed with a fistful of Barry White albums and a way of asking a girl to take her shirt off as if he were explicating a Zen koan. (He turns sleaze into a "cause.") This sort of thing might not go over anymore in the big city, but it works wonders on Ken's new neighbors, Vicki-Ann (Rebecca Frith) and Dimity (Miranda Otto), a couple of nervous, boyfriend-starved sisters who develop a rivalrous fixation on the love man next door. *Love Serenade* proceeds as a series of pleasingly daft comic dislocations. Ken Sherry, absurd as he obviously is, is the only fish (literally) in this backwater pond; with his poker-faced, if-it-feels-good-do-it charm, he's so utterly beyond the pale he's like an alien in polyester. The movie, however, would have had more of a lift to it had it left the two sisters basking in his '70s-sexy glow. They start out crabby and morose and end up pretty much the same way. **B-** —OG

In Theaters

AIR FORCE ONE (R) Richly tense and satisfying. Harrison Ford as the President of the United States is such a perfect piece of casting that it's at once a fantasy and a joke: The joke is how perfect the

ALIVE AND KICKING (R) The 1995 dateline of this heartfelt British AIDS drama (before the benefits of protease inhibitors) gives the production—so well performed, made with such fervor—a feeling of enervation. Jason Flemyng stars as a beautiful dancer with AIDS who falls into a turbulent love relationship with a hard-drinking HIV-negative psychotherapist (Antony Sher). **B-** (#391, Aug. 8) —LS

CAREER GIRLS (R) It's not easy to get close to aggressive Hannah (Katrin Cartlidge) and shy Annie

backs to the girls' university days with the story of their reunion and rebounding after a gap of six years. **B+** (#391, Aug. 8) —LS

CONTACT (PG) An unfashionably sincere summer entertainment that makes you consider deep thoughts: proof in itself of the existence of a Higher Power. Jodie Foster stars as an astronomer who makes contact with ET intelligence. Directed, with a big spirit and a *Forrest Gump*ish touch of goo-goo, by Robert Zemeckis. **B+** (#388, July 18) —LS



STAR(GAZING) APPEAL: Foster and costar Matthew McConaughey go a-courtin' in *Contact*

fantasy is. When *Air Force One* is hijacked by a Russian terrorist (Gary Oldman), Ford's red-blooded liberal superjock leaps into *Die Hard* mode. Director Wolfgang Petersen works with clean, swift precision. By the end, even the pop patriotism is charged with conviction. **A** (#389, July 25) —OG

(Lynda Steadman), the stars of this interesting character study from Mike Leigh. But the effort yields a rewarding take on the power of friendship. Leigh—working more in the bleak, twisty style of *Life Is Sweet* than the satisfyingly emotional style of *Secrets & Lies*—splices flash-

GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE (PG) Like a monkey pelting passersby with banana peels, this live-action Disney remake of the hip 1960s animated cartoon hits you on the head until you laugh. Brendan Fraser is appealingly game as the human primate raised by apes. **B** (#389, July 25) —LS

WINNER OF THE WEEK

'My Best Friend's Wedding'

At \$109 million and counting, the unstoppable romantic comedy just surpassed *Batman & Robin* at the box office.



LOSER OF THE WEEK

'Picture Perfect'

Even with Jennifer Aniston and good reviews, this romantic comedy proved all too stoppable.

IN THE COMPANY OF MEN (R) Here's the shocking premise: Chad (Aaron Eckhart), a lethal white-collar company man, convinces his buddy Howard (Matt Malloy) that the two of them should flatter a random woman with attention, win her heart, and then dump her, hard. The wellspring of rage and cruelty first-time writer-director Neil LaBute taps into in this stunning, unsettling, beautifully written drama is so bottomless and fresh that admiration washes away all affront at this ballsy depiction of man's inhumanity to woman, and man. **A** (#390, Aug. 1) —LS

KISS ME, GUIDO (R) If writer-director Tony Vitale ladles on the clichés with extra sauce, *Guido* still has a hey-Ma-I'm-makin'-a-movie enthusiasm that's more infectious than it has a right to be. Nick Scotti is appealing as a young De Niro wannabe who plunges unknowingly into Greenwich Village's gay culture. **C+** (#390, Aug. 1) —TB

MRS. BROWN (PG) It's 1864, and Queen Victoria (Judi Dench), a widow for three years, remains in a terrible funk. Only one man, it

seems, can snap her out of it: John Brown (Billy Connolly), the royal family's robust Scottish hunting guide. Dench marshals an armada of frowns and winces, but even as the film teases us with the underlying "sensuality" of the relationship, it fails to make it a convincing bond. **C+** (#389, July 25) —OG

NOTHING TO LOSE (R) Tim Robbins and Martin Lawrence star in a mismatched-buddies-on-the-road story that's sharper and funnier than you'd expect from a racist, formulaic comedy starring a high-minded director and an angry sitcom star. **B-** (#389, July 25) —LS

187 (R) When Trevor Garfield (Samuel L. Jackson) wanders into class at John Quincy Adams High School in Los Angeles, the kids throw him looks of pure homicide. Staged like a Nike commercial for the apocalypse, with the camera circling past images of the graffiti jungle, *187* is *To Sir, With Love* turned into *Midnight Express*—the teacher film as high-gloss pressure cooker. It seems an act of monumental perversity to cast an actor as exuberant as Samuel L. Jackson in the role of a teacher who has become a burned-out zombie. **C-** (#391, Aug. 8) —OG

PICTURE PERFECT (PG-13) The negative: another contemporary story about a woman with a successful career punished with a lousy personal life. The positive: Jennifer Aniston is appealing in this viewer-friendly romantic comedy as a young ad exec who, for business purposes, claims a guy she met at a wedding (Jay Mohr) is her fiancé. But then she's in a quandary when the nice guy falls in love with her while she only has eyes for the office lothario (Kevin Bacon). **B** (#390, Aug. 1) —LS

SHALL WE DANCE? (PG) Shohei (Koji Yukusho), a Japanese corporate accountant, rides the train home each night nursing a secret dream of...something. Then he signs up for ballroom-dance lessons, and slowly he begins to come alive. The romance here is that of a nation learning to dance with itself. **B+** (#388, July 18) —OG

STAR MAPS (R) What if the young Mexican men on Sunset Boulevard who hawk street guides to the homes of movie stars were really prostitutes? That's the intriguing premise of an ambitious debut from writer-director Miguel Arteta. He gets points for originality—but debits for a shaky production marred by weak performers churning up scenes of purplish histrionics. **C+** (#390, Aug. 1) —LS

BOX OFFICE

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE:
Spawn raises hell
in Satan's army

'SPAWN' VIVANT

THE FX-HEAVY COMIC-book-fantasy *Spawn* not only scared audiences but startled Hollywood with an unexpected \$21.2 million opening weekend (including \$1.5 million from previews). Also startling—in a good way—was Harrison Ford's *Air Force One*. In its second weekend, the thriller grossed another \$25.7 million, beating the \$23.8 million that Ford's *The Fugitive* rang up during its first weekend in 1993. *Spawn*, on the other hand, isn't likely to have such staying power; its business dropped 14 percent from Friday to Saturday. But the \$43 million movie should gross at least \$50 million. Its teen fans are clearly still in an escapist summer mood, since they ditched the high school drama *187*. Its 12th-place debut may be the only thing that could make director Kevin Reynolds nostalgic for his famously turbulent last movie, *Waterworld*.

TOP 20		WEEKEND GROSS*	NO. OF SITES	WEEKEND PER-SITE AVERAGE	WEEKS IN RELEASE	GROSS TO DATE*
1	AIR FORCE ONE Columbia	\$25.7	2,919	\$8,816	2	\$80.7
2	SPAWN New Line	\$21.2	2,536	\$8,364	1	\$21.2
3	GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE Walt Disney	\$8.9	2,605	\$3,408	3	\$64.3
4	MEN IN BLACK Columbia	\$8.0	2,932	\$2,732	5	\$208.1
5	PICTURE PERFECT 20th Century Fox	\$7.8	1,707	\$4,575	1	\$7.8
6	CONTACT Warner Bros.	\$6.2	2,270	\$2,828	4	\$76.6
7	AIR BUD Buena Vista	\$4.7	1,674	\$2,820	1	\$4.7
8	NOTHING TO LOSE Touchstone	\$4.6	1,800	\$2,496	3	\$32.2
9	FACE/OFF Paramount	\$3.8	1,888	\$1,988	6	\$102.0
10	GOOD BURGER Paramount	\$3.6	1,893	\$1,886	2	\$14.1
11	MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING TriStar	\$3.1	1,747	\$1,786	7	\$109.9
12	187 Warner Bros.	\$2.2	1,221	\$1,983	1	\$2.9
13	HERCULES Walt Disney	\$1.6	1,374	\$1,157	7	\$86.8
14	OUT TO SEA 20th Century Fox	\$0.7	802	\$881	5	\$25.1
15	ULEE'S GOLD Orion	\$0.6	346	\$1,694	8	\$6.3
16	SPEED 2: CRUISE CONTROL 20th Century Fox	\$0.5	643	\$854	8	\$47.0
17	SHALL WE DANCE? Miramax	\$0.5	74	\$6,788	4	\$2.0
18	CON AIR Touchstone	\$0.5	484	\$1,002	9	\$86.8
19	MRS. BROWN Miramax	\$0.4	67	\$7,766	2	\$10
20	OPERATION CONDOR Entertainment	\$0.4	551	\$731	3	\$9.8

SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. TWO WEEKEND OF AUG. 1-3 *WEEKEND GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS
1 INCLUDES SOME MULTISCREEN THEATERS AND PRINTS SHIPPED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SITES



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NICKELODEON
Rugrats
8-8:30 PM
SATURDAYS

COMEDY CENTRAL
South Park
10-10:30 PM
WEDNESDAYS



Salty 'Peanuts'

It's a different world, Charlie Brown: These days, cartoon kids range from neurotic innocents to petulant potty mouths. Bruce Fretts takes issue with one raw upstart and celebrates a clever fave.

THE KIDS AREN'T ALL ALL RIGHT: As the *Rugrats* pick up speed (top), *South Park*'s tots take the low road

FIRST, A CONFESSION: I don't care for most cartoons. They fall into one of two categories: kiddie crap, like ABC's Disney block (*The Mighty Ducks*, etc.), or so-called adult animation, which is said to be going through a golden age. I don't buy it. I know I'm in danger of having my critic's license revoked for writing this, but I don't find *The Simpsons* or *King of the Hill* funny.

Two animated series about kids—*South Park*, which is aimed at adults, and *Rugrats*, targeted at tots—illustrate this demographic duality vividly. Comedy Central isn't joking when it says *South Park* is for mature audiences. It's the story of four Colorado third graders who call one another unprintable names, punt a baby, and fart fire (after one is anally probed by aliens).

If only the kids' jokes were as fresh as their mouths. Sure, it was hilarious when the Bad News Bears cursed like sailors, but that was two decades ago. Equally out-of-date are this show's stabs at satire: A gun nut stares into a mirror and asks "You talkin' to me?" in the umpteenth-millionth parody of *Taxi Driver*. What's next—a timely send-up of *Smokey and the Bandit*?

It might help if the *South Park* kids had personalities, but they're as one-dimensional as the show's cut-and-paste animation. Cartman is the fat kid (he's subjected to limp put-downs like "You're such a fat-ass, when you walk down the street, people go, 'God damn, that's a big fat ass!'"). Kenny is so tightly wrapped up in his parka, you can't understand a

word he says (in one running gag, Kenny is killed in a horrific way each week). The other two kids, Stan and Kyle, seem indistinguishable—save for Stan's tendency to vomit when girls talk to him.

There's an interchangeable pair on *Rugrats*, too, but at least you can tell them apart: Lil and Phil are identical twin babies; Lil's the one with the pink bow in her hair. The show revolves around their playmates, Tommy (the bald, good-natured one) and Chuckie (the red-haired, bespectacled, neurotic one). Launched in 1990, *Rugrats* has become the highest-rated show on cable (the first new episodes since 1994 begin airing Aug. 23). A *Rugrats* video recently hit No. 3 on Videocassette sales charts, ahead of *Jerry Maguire*.

How to explain this phenomenon? Simple: *Rugrats* is such a witty, original show parents don't mind watching it with their children. It sees the world through kids' eyes, literally (with point-of-view drawings of looming grown-ups) and figuratively. The *Rugrats*' hazy perception of reality often leads to sly malapropisms. When Chuckie gets chicken pox, his pals hear it as "chicken pops" ("Maybe it's a cereal," Lil speculates).

Like *South Park*, *Rugrats* engages in frequent bathroom humor, but it's in keeping with the series' gently looppy spirit. In the classic "Chuckie vs. The Potty," the eternally nervous 2-year-old is traumatized by toilet training. He dreams he's an inmate being taken to "The Chair" as diapered prisoners taunt him. When he's flushed down the tubes, it's a moment of *Train-spotting*-esque surrealism more subversively funny than anything seen on *South Park*.

Rugrats: A *South Park*: C

ON THE AIR

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE TUBE, BY JOE FLINT

■ **A SANDERS SHUFFLE?** HBO's *The Larry Sanders Show* is known for its brutally candid portrayal of the TV biz; next season, it might take that realism to new heights. Just as plotlines on the show have featured Jon Stewart angling to take over Garry Shandling's hosting chair, Stewart could do just that in real life should Shandling make good on threats that the upcoming season is his last. "There have been discussions between Jon and Garry," admits a source close to the situation. "One scenario is for Jon to return this season, then spin it off into his own show." Stewart may have to do some juggling to get the gig: He's under contract to David Letterman's *Worldwide Pants* to develop, among other things, a late-night talker for CBS, and he's already a guest host for Tom Snyder on the Eye's *Late, Late Show*. *Sanders* producer Brillstein-Grey Entertainment and Stewart declined to comment.



STEWART

■ **FUTURE SHOCK:** Having just wrapped up negotiations for two more years of *Friends* (through the 1999-2000 season), at a cost estimated to be over \$3 million per episode, NBC execs can now take a deep breath in preparation for what may be the most expensive renewal in TV history: *ER*.

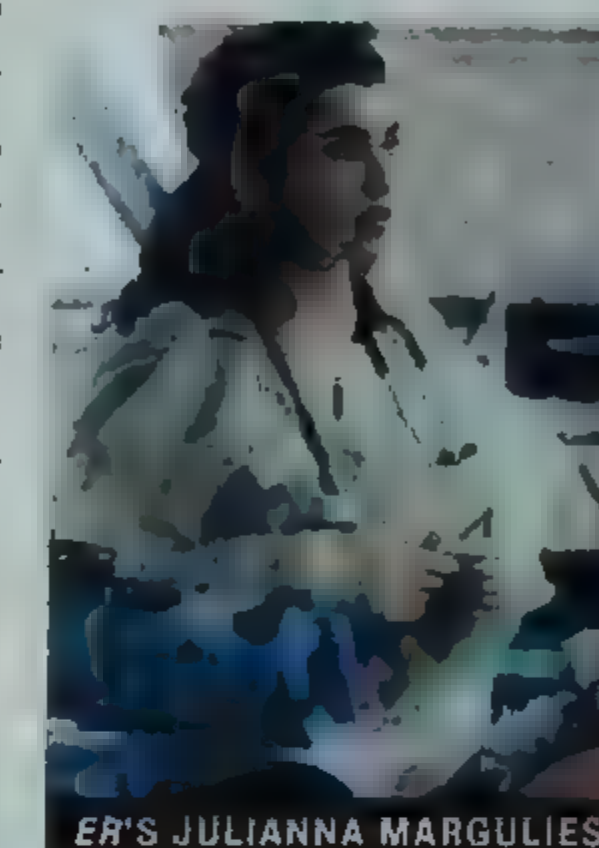
Warner Bros. Television, the show's producer, has a huge bargaining chip: It knows that NBC's Thursdays would be considerably less must-see without TV's top drama. But despite *ER*'s prestigious No. 1 Nielsen spot, the studio actually loses money per episode (Warner Bros. must eat the difference between the roughly \$1.5 million in production costs and the just over \$1 million NBC pays in licensing fees)—at least until syndication money

studio for *ER*'s deficits thus far, as well as boost the license fee. Some are predicting that figure could go as high as \$5 million per episode, making the costly *Seinfeld* negotiations look like chump change.

But don't cry for NBC just yet: As it stands now, the net easily makes its \$1 million back during a single commercial break (a 30-second spot for *Friends* runs \$350,000 to \$400,000; a commercial for *ER* can cost \$500,000). And NBC has never walked away from the bargaining table empty-handed: *Friends* will produce 24 episodes this season (the norm is 22), and the net's deals with *Seinfeld* and *Frasier* give it third runs at a reasonable price.

■ **AND SO ON...** ABC has ordered director Ed Burns' (*She's the One*) first TV effort, the sitcom *Raise the Roof*, for mid-season. Yup, that's the very same show entertainment president Jamie Tarses had ordered in May, only to be forced to rescind by a peeved CEO Robert Iger (he hadn't given permission)... CBS execs are miffed at NBC, whose honchos are said to have bad-mouthed the Eye's purchase of the *Country Music Awards* (previously a Peacock show). NBC claimed it's a money loser. Not true, says the CBS brass: NBC made \$3 million off the show, then tried to lowball a renewal deal only to get beat.... *The Drew Carey Show* just finished a location shoot in Cleveland for a new opening credits sequence (a dance number set to the Presidents of the United States of America's "Cleveland Rocks"). Exec producer Bruce Helford reports that the cast's presence in Cleveland was "like the Beatles coming to America." Indeed, in just one hour, 4,000 tickets to the filming were scooped up by would-be extras.

(Additional reporting by Dan Snierson)



ER'S JULIANNA MARGULIES

Dude... This Sucks

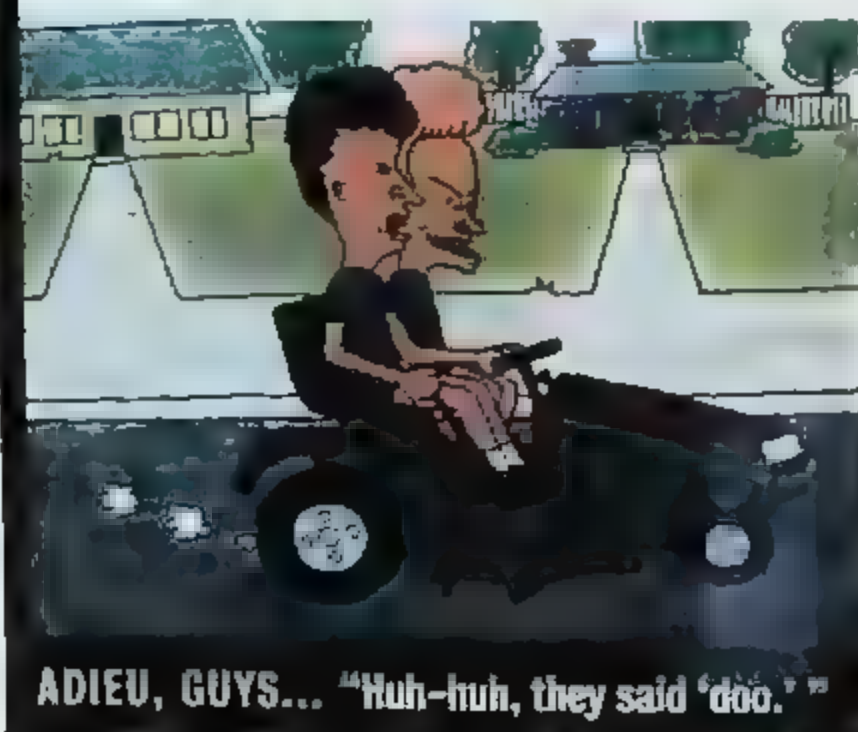
We mourn the loss of fresh *Beavis and Butt-head* episodes

AFTER FOUR YEARS, 209 EPISODES, and innumerable boogers, farts, and stiffies, production on *Beavis and Butt-head* is dead. And that, as many will attest, sucks. For this wasn't just any old MTV cartoon show. No, *Beavis and Butt-head* was loaded with social significance and stuff.

Created by twisted Texan Mike Judge, the B boys accomplished much in their short lives: They chainsawed a grasshopper, spray-painted a dog, incinerated a birthday cake, and watched lots of Metallica videos. They also blessed us with bits of wisdom, such as "Did you know when you're eating a rump roast, you're eating a cow's butt?"

As with all visionaries, though, they had some detractors. In 1994, South Carolina senator Ernest Hollings railed against the violence of, in his words, "Buffcoat and Beaver." Later, a Californian used some of his lottery winnings to start a campaign to ban the spotty-faced metalheads.

But the duo survived. And they'll live beyond the series, too: reruns will continue, and there will be future MTV specials; chances are, they'll also make a sequel to their successful 1996 movie. When that day comes, America can once again proclaim that never have two stars so richly deserved their share of the gross. —A.J. Jacobs



ADIEU, GUYS... "Huh-huh, they said 'doo.'" —A.J. Jacobs

COMEDY CENTRAL'S CLUB CATCH

COME TO 'UN-CABARET'

ON STAGE AT West Hollywood's LunaPark nightclub, Andy Dick is veering from his *NewsRadio* persona into Andy Kaufman territory. "I'm putting my life in musical theater form!" he explains to a baffled crowd, while a guitarist begins quietly strumming a ballad of childhood post-adoption blues. He sings: "Dill-ick, what a funny name for a boy.../Dill-ick, was that always your name...?" The tempo quickens. "Or was it Dickson, Dickotomy, Dick Clark, or Dickless...Dick?"

The audience is laughing—but nervously. "Very *Titanic*, that song," warns host Beth Lapid from a mic at a back table. As founder of the Un-Cabaret—the hep Sunday-night showcase for L.A.'s "alternative comedy" movement—Lapides interacts with each of the performers and tries to keep the tone improvisational but distinctly un-improv.

The balance between risk and palatability is especially pertinent tonight, since Comedy Central is taping the evening for the first in a series of *Un-Cabaret* specials (airing Aug. 23). Happily for the nervous network, the other performers—all guitarless—



UN-AMUSED: Dave Foley, Griffin & Thompson

don't push the envelope quite so far as Dick: *Suddenly Susan* sidekick Kathy Griffin tells a wicked story about trying to corrupt Hanson; comic/actor Taylor Negron waxes Proustian on the sensuality of L.A. summers; ex-Kid in the Hall Scott Thompson tells a child-



SEE DICK RUN WILD: Andy goes experimental

hood dead-body story; comedy-club-circuit regular Dana Gould gets fired up about teenage beggars; and then there's Julla Sweeney.

"The thing that was so revelatory for me about the Un-Cab," says Sweeney, who developed her *God Said, "Ha!"* book/CD/Broadway show (in which she details her battle with cervical cancer) in the intimate, 100-seat setting, "was that I could get laughs with things I thought would only be funny to my friend Wendy."

But everyone has a different take on what this mini-movement represents. Gould and the original Un-Cab gang used to call themselves "the anti-Lenos" in deference to their emphasis on narrative. To Griffin, the Un-Cab difference is that "in comedy clubs there are these rules you have to have a laugh every seven seconds, but here they're patient and they'll listen to a story."

Dick, who calls himself "the loose cannon of the group" (which, on other Sunday nights, might also include Janeane Garofalo, Merrill Markoe, Bob Odenkirk, and Collin Quinn), chides the others for playing it safe for the cameras. "The Un-Cabaret is supposed to be exploring new ground, more Lenny Bruce-y, more creepy and delicious. [The others] did stand-up, dude," he protests, "but I'm showing how you're supposed to do it! You're supposed to let go and let God, okay?" Yes, Mr. Clark. —Chris Willman

MAN'S GUIDE

DIAMONDS

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4. Learn the jargon. Your guide to quality and value is a combination of four characteristics called *The 4 C's*. They are: *Cut*, not the same as shape, but refers to the way the facets, or flat surfaces, are angled. A better cut offers more brilliance; *Color*, actually, close to no color is rarest; *Clarity*, the fewer natural marks, or "inclusions," the better; *Carat weight*, the larger the diamond, usually the more rare.

5. Determine your price range. What do you spend on the one woman in the world who is smart enough to marry you? Many people use the *two months' salary guideline*. Spend less and the relatives will talk. Spend more and they'll rave.
6. Watch her as you browse. Go by how she reacts, not by what she says. She may be reluctant to tell you what she really wants. Then once you have an idea of her taste, don't involve her in the actual purchase. You both will cherish the memory of your surprise.
7. Find a reputable jeweler, someone you can trust, to ensure you're getting a diamond you can be proud of. Ask questions. Ask friends who've gone through it. Ask the jeweler you choose why two diamonds that look the same are priced differently. Avoid Happy Harry's Diamond Basement.
8. *Learn more.* For the booklet "*How to buy diamonds you'll be proud to give*," call 1-800-FOREVER, Dept. 21.
9. Finally, think romance. And don't compromise. This is one of life's most important occasions. You want a diamond as unique as your love. *Besides, how else can two months' salary last forever?*

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REMOTE PATROL

BY BRUCE FRETTS

There may be a million stories in the naked city, but the ones under it aren't so hot

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD idea at the time. HBO solicited New York City subway riders to send in their experiences with the transit system, then hired a gaggle of writers and directors (overseen by coexec producers Jonathan Demme, director of *The Silence of the Lambs*, and actress Rosie Perez) to craft a series of short films based on those anecdotes. The result, *Subway Stories* (HBO, Aug. 17, 10-11:30

p.m.), is as messy and sprawling as the system itself. Cramming 10 tales into its 82-minute running time, this "omnibus" misses more stops than it hits; only a few chapters capture the subway in all its queasy glory. To save you time, we've reviewed each segment and come up with an average grade:

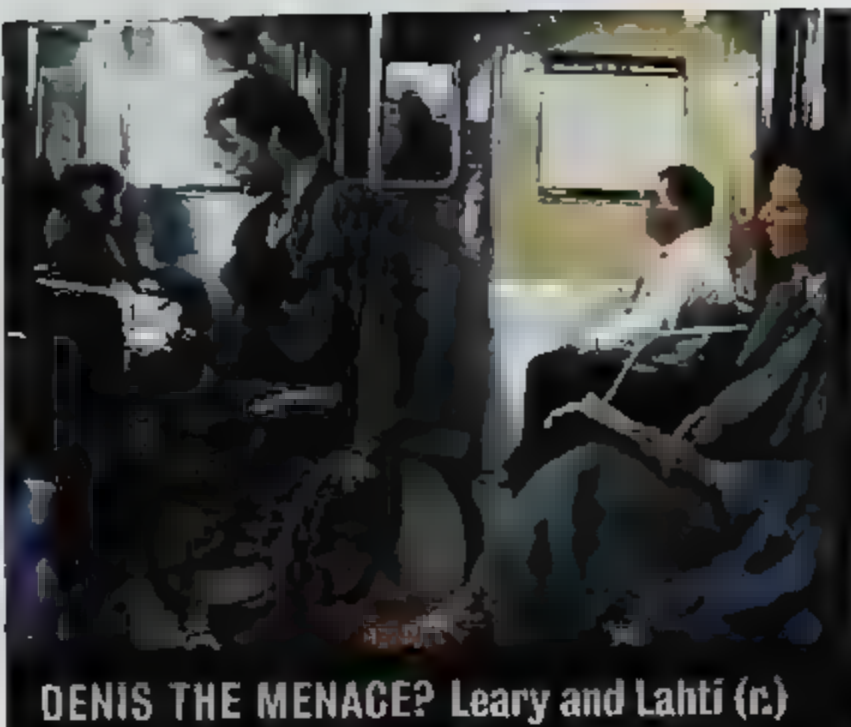
"Subway Car From Hell" Oscar winner Demme's contribution is, surprisingly, the

slightest. Performance artist Bill Irwin (*Fool Moon*) plays a musician who buys a hot dog from a vendor (Kris Parker, a.k.a. rapper KRS-One), then gets stuck on a stinky car. And the point is...? **D-**

"The Red Shoes" Denis Leary plays a wheelchair-riding panhandler who claims to be an HIV-positive Vietnam vet. When he rolls over the shoes of passenger Christine Lahti, she accuses him of being a fraud. Written by John Guare (*Six Degrees of Separation*), it has an intriguing setup, but like too many of these *Stories*, no payoff. **C+**

"The 5:24" It's a kick to see *subUrbia* slacker Steve Zahn playing an uptight stockbroker who gets tips from a man (Jerry Stiller) who mooches his copy of *The Wall Street Journal* every morning. Stiller does good dramatic work, but like *Seinfeld*, this one's really about nothing. **B-**

"Fern's Heart of Darkness" Why cast verbally agile Bonnie Hunt (*Jerry Maguire*) in a virtually wordless role as a tourist who gets locked in a station overnight? When she's mistaken for a homeless per-



DENIS THE MENACE? Leary and Lahti (r.)

son the next morning, you may get a strong sense of déjà vu: *Kate & Allie* did the same story line a decade ago. **C**

"The Listeners" The only pleasure in this slim vignette is sick voyeurism: Lili Taylor (*I Shot Andy Warhol*) and Michael Rapaport (*Mighty Aphrodite*) play a squabbling couple. In real life, Rapaport was recently arrested for harassing ex-girlfriend Taylor (the case is still pending). **C-**

"Underground" A teenager (Zachary Taylor) meets and makes out with an older woman (Mercedes Ruehl). It was sexier when Tom Cruise and Rebecca De Mornay did it in *Risky Business*. **D+**

"Honey-Getter" Monologist Danny Hoch (*Some People*) wrote and stars in this tale of two dolts who accost a woman

(Sarita Choudhury). Hoch's fine ear for homeboy patois is in full effect here. **A-**

"Sax Cantor Riff" An African-American vocalist (Taral Hicks) and a Jewish cantor (Dan Rous) sing with a sax man (Kenny Garrett). An awkward and all-too-obvious plea for racial harmony. **C**

"Love on the A Train" Model/slashing victim Marla Hanson penned this story of a yuppie (*The Brothers McMullen*'s Mike McGlone) who has a silent sexual relationship with a stranger (Rosie Perez) on the train. Wonderfully twisted stuff from *Bad Lieutenant* auteur Abel Ferrara. **A**

"Manhattan Miracle" Jonathan's nephew Ted Demme (*Beautiful Girls*) directs Gregory Hines as a man who thinks a pregnant woman (Anne Heche!) is about to throw herself onto the tracks. Nepotism at its worst. **D**
Subway Stories (overall): **C**

UNDERGROUND FILMMAKERS: Demme and Perez are *Subway*'s producers

COMPULSIVE
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THERE IS HOPE.



"La Femme Nikita"

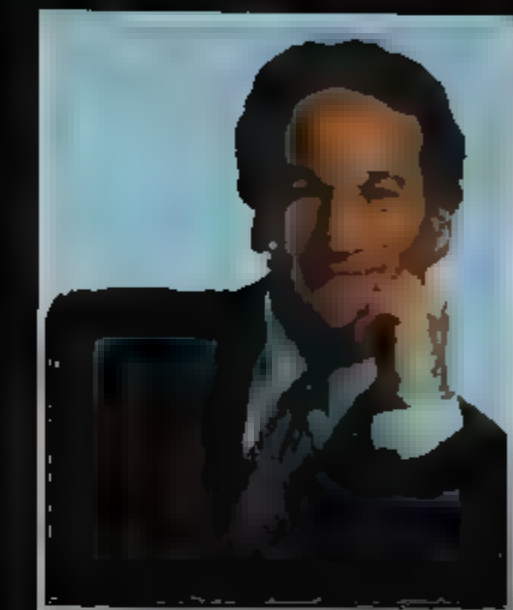
USA
NETWORK
The cure for the common show.

WINNER OF THE WEEK

Robert Stack

The former *Untouchable* is no longer unemployed: CBS picked up his long-running reality show, *Unsolved Mysteries* (recently canceled by NBC).

LOSER OF THE WEEK



Bill Maher

The ratings for his prime-time *Politically Incorrect* were so bad, ABC pulled the last edition for a rerun of the low-impact cop show *High Incident*.

SOUND BITES

"He's disabled. Plus, he's the President. Can you imagine the parking spot this guy has?"

NORM MACDONALD on Clinton's knee injury on *Late Show* With David Letterman

"Anna Nicole Smith's boyfriend is being charged with smuggling heroin. Prosecutors say he'll be in prison so long that when he gets out she'll be really interested in him."

CONAN O'BRIEN on *Late Night*

"Tonight is the first game of Monday Night Football. The good thing about it is—at least Kathie Lee knows where Frank Gifford is tonight."

DAVID LETTERMAN on *Late Show*

"This week's *Newsweek*, the cover story is 'The Now Rich' and it features 25 of the richest Americans—or as Autumn Jackson calls them, 'Daddy.'"

JAY LENO on *The Tonight Show*

THE RATINGS

'JUST' CAN'T CUT IT

NBC's *Just Shoot Me* (34th)—the spring mid-season replacement—turned-fall starter—made its post-*Frasier* (20th) time-period debut but misfired opposite ABC's *Spin City* (tied for 20th). Of course, in the fall *Shoot* will be up against ABC's new dads comedy *Hiller and Diller*, which won't be aiming for the same audience. CBS made the real killing by landing its first Tuesday-night win since

The Last Don; *Promised Land* (44th) averaged 8.6 million viewers while part 2 of the Eye's miniseries *In the Best of Families: Marriage, Pride and Madness* (9th) was the week's highest-rated movie. CBS' Monday comedy block also ruled, blowing away NBC's "Must She" lineup for the sixth straight week.

SEGAL DROPPINGS: *Shoot*'s George and Laura San Giacomo

TOP 30

VIEWERS*	LAST WEEK
1 17.2 SEINFELD (R) NBC, Thursday, 9 p.m.	1
2 15.0 20/20 ABC, Friday, 10 p.m.	3
3 14.4 ER (R) NBC, Thursday, 10 p.m.	5
14.4 SUDDENLY SUSAN (R) NBC, Thursday, 9:30 p.m.	2
5 13.7 TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL (R) CBS, Sunday, 8 p.m.	9
0 13.6 60 MINUTES CBS, Sunday, 7 p.m.	10
7 13.2 DATELINE NBC NBC, Monday, 10 p.m.	8
8 12.7 LAW & ORDER (R) NBC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	26
9 12.6 MOVIE: IN THE BEST OF FAMILIES—MARRIAGE, PRIDE AND MADNESS, PART 2 (R) CBS, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	—
10 12.1 DATELINE NBC NBC, Tuesday, 10 p.m.	4
12.1 FRIENDS (R) NBC, Thursday, 8 p.m.	7
12.1 MEN BEHAVING BADLY (R) NBC, Thursday, 9:30 p.m.	7
12 12.0 MOVIE: LIES OF THE HEART—THE STORY OF LAURIE KELLOGG (R) ABC, Monday, 9 p.m.	—
14 11.7 THE X-FILES (R) Fox, Sunday, 9 p.m.	34
15 11.6 HOME IMPROVEMENT (R) ABC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	13
10 11.4 DATELINE NBC NBC, Friday, 9 p.m.	20
17 11.3 THE DREW CAREY SHOW (R) ABC, Wednesday, 9 p.m.	12
18 11.1 PRIMETIME LIVE ABC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	11
19 11.0 48 HOURS CBS, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	—
20 10.7 FRASIER (R) NBC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	28
10.7 SPIN CITY (R) ABC, Tuesday, 9:30 p.m.	40
22 10.6 MOVIE: SHE FOUGHT ALONE (R) NBC, Wednesday, 8 p.m.	—
23 10.4 MOVIE: IS THERE LIFE OUT THERE? (R) CBS, Sunday, 9 p.m.	—
24 10.3 DIAGNOSIS MURDER (R) CBS, Thursday, 8 p.m.	42
10.3 ELLEN (R) ABC, Wednesday, 9:30 p.m.	16
26 10.1 MOVIE: THE SLEEPWALKER KILLING (R) NBC, Sunday, 8 p.m.	—
27 10.0 CLUELESS (R) ABC, Friday, 9:30 p.m.	28
9.9 SABRINA, THE TEENAGE WITCH (R) ABC, Friday, 8 p.m.	19
9.9 TURNING POINT (R) ABC, Thursday, 9 p.m.	45
9.9 UFOs: THE BEST EVIDENCE EVER CAUGHT ON TAPE Fox, Monday, 8 p.m.	—

*IN MILLIONS WEEK OF JULY 30-AUG. 6, 1997 (R) RERUN
SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH

HAVE YOU BEEN POPPED LATELY?

"Stupendous Pop Culture"

- Entertainment Weekly

"Deliciously clever"

- Los Angeles Times

"Five seconds and you're hooked"

- Detroit Free Press

Her mouth has since been called "the sexiest in rock-n-roll."

Jewel grew up using an outhouse.

1976: Mellencamp's manager renames him Johnny Cougar.

Fake tattoo.

POP UP VIDEO

7:30
WEDNESDAYS
ONLY ON

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WHAT to WATCH

A DAY-TO-DAY GUIDE TO NOTABLE PROGRAMS. TIMES ARE EASTERN DAYLIGHT AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

MONDAY

AUG. 11

8-9PM*

EVENING AT POPS

(PBS) John Williams conducts a multimedia concert entitled "Star Wars and the Hollywood Sound," which features excerpts from the George Lucas trilogy as well as *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Jaws*, and *Schindler's List*. (R)

*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

9-10PM

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

(The WB, TV-PG) Buffy gets touched by an Angel who steers her clear of a claw-handed vampire. (R)

9-11PM

ANY MOTHER'S SON

(Lifetime, TV-14) Bonnie Bedelia stars in a TV movie about the mother of a murdered gay sailor who battles prejudice and official obfuscation to get to the bottom of his violent death.

10-11PM

ELVIS FROM THE WAIST UP

(VH1, TV-PG) The documentary centerpiece of the video channel's second *Elvis Week*, *Waist Up* (writ-



SERIES DEBUT

ten by biographer Peter Guralnick) focuses on the small screen's contribution to the King's ascent.

10-11PM

WHAT DO WOMEN REALLY WANT?

(The Learning Channel, TV-14) The broad (as it were) study of the psycho-biological underpinnings of female eroticism makes the shocking revelation that women really, really like sex!

11AM-NOON

THE VIEW

(ABC) Producer Barbara Walters describes the new *Politically Incorrect*-meets-*Coffee Talk* confab as "a bunch of women sitting around talking about the issues of the day—and I don't mean Bosnia, but I do mean almost everything else." Along with *Turning Point*'s Meredith Vieira, Court TV's Star Jones, MTV News progeny Debbie Matenopoulos, and comedian Joy Behar, she'll oversee a "question of the day" segment, celebrity interviews, and studio-audience interaction. She adds: "We want it to be fun and entertaining. At the same time, we want to dish."

TUESDAY

AUG. 12

9:30-10 PM

JUST SHOOT ME

(NBC, TV-PG) Jay Leno and Crystal Bernard guest on a Secretary's Day-themed episode that finds Finch (David Spade) enraged at being treated as a mere girl Friday. (R)

10-11PM*

LETTER FROM WACO

(PBS) Documentary director Don Howard's bittersweet portrait of his now-notorious Texas hometown (which also gave us Steve Martin and Dr. Pepper!).

*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

10-11:30PM

FLEETWOOD MAC: THE DANCE

(MTV, TV-PG) The '70s supergroup visits MTV's 10 Spot for a reunion performance (taped last May) featuring new material as well as some chart-topping classics.

ANIMAL ATTRACTION?



8:30-9PM

NEWSRADIO

(NBC, TV-PG) Dave (Dave Foley, left) whips the WNYX staff into a Halloween frenzy, and his cross-dressing masquerade is convincing enough to make girlfriend Lisa jealous and remind us just how good the ex-Kid in the Hall can look in a dress. (R)



Choice Reruns

NOW THE TRUTH IS REALLY OUT there: *The X-Files* begins airing repeats every weeknight, 8-9 p.m. and 11 p.m.-midnight, on FX, starting on Tuesday, Aug. 19. It doesn't take paranormal-busting FBI agents Mulder (David Duchovny) and Scully (Gillian Anderson) to crack the conspiracy that led to the upstart cable network's landing such a lucrative syndication property: Both FX and Fox (which produces *X-Files*) are owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Latecoming *X-Files* will now be able to follow the show's labyrinthine mythology from the start, as FX will air the episodes in order, commencing with the 1994 pilot. You may be surprised how many of the drama's trademarks were in place from the get-go—William B. Davis' Cigarette Smoking Man is already lurking in the shadows, for instance. But the series hadn't completely found its tone yet: When Mulder walks in on an underwear-clad Scully in her hotel room, the sexual tension is so atypically overt that the show seems like it could be called *The X-Rated Files*. —BF

DOUBLE X-POSURE: Mulder and Scully reopen the *Files* in syndication on FX

WHAT TO WATCH

WEDNESDAY Aug. 13

PEOPLE'S COURTNEY

8-10PM
BEAUTY'S REVENGE (NBC, TV-14)
8:30-9PM
SPIN CITY (ABC, TV-PG) Former *Melrose Place* tenant Courtney Thorne-Smith (below) competes against herself in wildly differing guises. In the 1995 TV movie *Revenge*, she plays an obsessed, possibly lethal beauty queen who's got her knickers in a knot over an unassuming heartland farmer (*Homicide's* Kyle Secor). Then, on an unusually poignant *Spin City* episode from last January, she guest-stars as an assistant district attorney who's dating a shaky, newly single Mike Flaherty (Michael J. Fox). Daphne Zuniga, eat your heart out.

9-10PM
PARTY OF FIVE (Fox, TV-PG) Here's your opportunity to get up to speed with the belatedly acclaimed family drama, as Fox re-airs the 1994 pilot. (R)

9-9:30PM
THE DREW CAREY SHOW (ABC, TV-PG) The passing of Drew's high school music teacher—and first lover—sparks tender memories, until he realizes he wasn't the only one who got to go to the, er, head of the class. (R)



9:30-10PM
ELLEN (ABC, TV-PG) This remembrance of sweeps past (February of '97, to be exact) features guests David Crosby, Aaron Neville, and Bonnie Raitt as Ellen's mentors at Rock and Roll Dream Camp. (R)

10-11PM
LAW & ORDER (NBC, TV-PG) When a wealthy old man is murdered, speculation turns to the proverbial trophy wife and loyal butler, as well as some less conventional suspects. (R)

10-11PM
20TH CENTURY WITH MIKE WALLACE: CROOKED COPS (A&E, TV-PG) The *60 Minutes* anchor provides an unsettling nightcap with this look at the history of police corruption.

The Guest List

Look Who's on The Couch This Week
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)



FISHBURNE



BARRYMORE



FRANZ



COLE



NEWTON



WRIGHT

REGIS & KATHIE LEE Monday Matt Lauer, Billy Crystal, Tony Danza, Pierce Brosnan **Tuesday** Musical guests Hanson, Spice Girls, Billy Corgan (Smashing Pumpkins), Jewel, Erykah Badu **Wednesday** Michael Richards, Jason Alexander, Jerry Seinfeld **Thursday** Whoopi Goldberg, Mike Myers, Lisa Kudrow, Val Kilmer **Friday** Rosie O'Donnell, Alex Trebek, David Letterman

ROSIE O'DONNELL Monday Mary Tyler Moore, Valerie Harper (R) **Tuesday** Ron Howard, Jennifer Connelly, musical guest Tanya Tucker (R) **Wednesday** Dennis Franz, Christopher Walken **Thursday** Demi Moore, Patrick Swayze, Robin Wright **Friday** Chita Rivera, Alicia Silverstone, Rob Reiner, Chris Tucker (*Money Talks*)

JAY LENO Monday Charlie Sheen, musical guest John Fogerty **Tuesday** Lisa Kudrow, musical guest Natalie Cole **Wednesday** Laurence Fishburne **Thursday** Gary Sinise, musical guests Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham **Friday** Kevin Sorbo

DAVID LETTERMAN Monday Drew Barrymore, Martin Mull (R) **Tuesday** Dana Carvey, Robin Quivers, musical guests Afghan Whigs (R) **Wednesday** Billy Crystal, musical guests Los Lobos (R) **Thursday** Goldie Hawn (R) **Friday** Mel Gibson, Ray Romano (R)

CONAN O'BRIEN Monday Dana Carvey, Garry Marshall (R) **Tuesday** Musical guest Cool for August **Wednesday** Wayne Newton **Thursday** Michael Rapaport, musical guests Wilco **Friday** Jeremy Northam

THURSDAY Aug. 14

4-5PM
ABC AFTERSCHOOL SPECIAL (ABC, TV-PG) Morgan Fairchild stars in the comedy "Teenage Confidential" about a pair of wackily over-protective parents and the daughter they put under surveillance. (R)

8-8:30PM
FRIENDS (NBC, TV-14) Rachel sets up Chandler with her boss, played by the razor-sharp Alison LaPlaca (*The John Larroquette Show*). (R)

8:05-10:20PM
ROCKY V (TBS, TV-PG) How many dim-witted boxers can you handle? Test your pugilistic patience with this 1990

slugfest before catching the supposedly real thing (see box below).

9-9:30PM
SEINFELD (NBC, TV-PG) A forced hiatus from sex leaves George with incredible brainpower, inspiring Elaine to try celibacy with her med-school flame. (R)

NOW EAR THIS!

10-11PM
HOLYFIELD VS. TYSON (ABC) We hear that ABC outbid the TV Food Network for the right to bring the much-chewed-over heavyweight bout to broadcast television.

11:30PM-1AM
PAUL MONETTE: THE BRINK OF SUMMER'S END (Cinemax, TV-PG) Linda Hunt narrates the documentary—which snagged an Audience award at Sundance '97—profilling the late gay activist and author of *Becoming a Man: Half a Life Story*.



What do we drink when we write songs? MMMmilk. And you should too. 'Cause over half of you don't get enough calcium. But at least 3 ice-cold glasses a day will give your bones lots of calcium to grow strong. In fact, we aren't sure what's getting bigger faster. Our new single, or our brother Zac.



MILK

Where's your mustache?

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HERE'S HOW WE DO IT.

MOVIE TITLE: *The Ticket*
(on USA Sat, 8/16 at 2PM/1C)

Movie Description: "Friends" try to kill a young woman on her way to cash in the winning lottery ticket.

Advertising Headline:
LOTTERIES. IF THE TAXES
DON'T KILL YOU, YOUR
FRIENDS WILL.

HOLLYWOOD NOW HERE'S YOUR
CHANCE TO DO IT.

MOVIE TITLE: *Trucks*
Movie Description: A small rural town lives in fear when a group of renegade trucks come to life and terrorize its citizens.

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See instructions below.

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2-consecutive-night trip for four
to Los Angeles. Plus a VIP tour of
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NETWORK**
The cure for the common show.

To enter: Mail a 3" x 5" card hand printed with your name, complete street address, zip code, and home and business phone numbers with your "original" headline of 20 words or less to: USA ORIGINALS CONTEST, P.O. Box 725, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10101. Contest ends and all entries must be received (not postmarked) no later than September 1, 1997. One entry per person. Not responsible for late, misdirected, or postage-due mail. Entries become property of sponsor. Winner will be determined by judging all entries based on the following criteria: creativity (75%) and originality (25%). Judging will be done by *Entertainment Weekly* and USA Network whose decisions are final in all matters relating to this contest. **GRAND PRIZE:** (1) A 3-day, 2-consecutive-night trip for four to Los Angeles. Prize consists of round-trip coach air transportation for Grand Prize winner and three guests between major airport nearest winner's residence and Los Angeles, 2-consecutive-night standard hotel accommodations (two rooms/double occupancy per room), ground transfers to/from L.A. airport, tickets to and a VIP tour of Universal Studios Hollywood, and dinner for four (estimated value \$4,300). **10 SECOND PRIZES:** One-year subscription to *Entertainment Weekly* magazine, plus USA Network merchandise (estimated value \$70/each).

RULES AND REGULATIONS: Selection of Winners/Odds: Open to U.S. residents only. No purchase necessary. Prize winners will be selected on or about November 3, 1997. Grand Prize winner must take trip by November 3, 1998. Winner must be 18 years or older or accompanied by parent or legal guardian. Odds of winning determined by number of entries received. Miscellaneous: Entering the USA ORIGINALS CONTEST constitutes permission to use the name, voice, and likeness of prize winners for advertising and publicity purposes (where legal) without further compensation. Winners will be required to sign an Affidavit of Eligibility and Publicity/Privacy Release within 14 days of date printed on notification or alternate winner will be determined. No prize substitutions or transfers. All taxes are responsibility of winner. Grand Prize travel companions will be required to sign a liability release prior to traveling. VIP tour portion of Grand Prize must be taken on a weekday. Employees & their families of USA Network, Time Inc., and Universal Studios Hollywood are not eligible. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. For winners: names send self-addressed, stamped envelope to: USA ORIGINALS CONTEST WINNERS, P.O. Box 725, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10101.

Entrants agree to release and hold harmless USA Network, Entertainment Weekly, Universal Studios Hollywood, its parent company Universal Studios Inc., and their respective affiliated companies, its and their respective officers, agents, directors and employees from and against any and all claims, injuries, damages or losses to person or property, liabilities of any nature or in any way connected with this contest, prize and/or travel to, from and visit at Universal Studios Hollywood.

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WHAT TO WATCH

FRIDAY

Aug. 15

8-9:35PM
THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS (Showtime, TV-G) In the original film, a group of kids enter an amateur hip-hop contest in the hopes of helping their financially strapped mom, and receive some pointers from a has-been rap star, played by Hammer (no, this is not a documentary).

10-MIDNIGHT
SPLIT SCREEN (Bravo, TV-PG) Plugging its sister outlet, the Independent Film Channel, Bravo premieres the IFC magazine dedicated to alterna-films. In the first segment, host John Pierson takes a look at *Swing Blade*, a satirical trailer combining two of last year's indie hits.

MIDNIGHT
30 HOURS OF ELVIS (TNT, TV-G) Like a morbidly kitschy New Year's Eve, TNT kicks off a 30-hour marathon timed to the 20th anniversary of the King's death. Included in the tribute are nine of his feature films, video clips constructed around previously unreleased tracks, and the entire, 1990 ABC series *Elvis*.

10-11PM
HOMICIDE: LIFE ON THE STREET (NBC, TV-14) Michelle Forbes' smarty-pants chief medical examiner, Jullanna Cox, comes to town, giving Pemberton and Bayliss a run for their money and the Baltimore detective drama a shot in the arm. (R)



THANK YOU VERRUH MUCH

SATURDAY

Aug. 16

6-7PM
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS (A&E) "Meth's Deadly High" looks at the near epidemic of crystal methamphetamine use.

11PM-MIDNIGHT
SONGS & VISIONS (Fox, TV-PG) A celebration of 40 years of pop music featuring performances by Rod Stewart, k.d. lang, Mary J. Blige, and Jon Bon Jovi.

PEEK-A-BOOB TUBE

10-11PM
NEXT TO NOTHING: A HISTORY OF LINGERIE (The Learning Channel, TV-14) To find out TLC's justification for airing this provocative special, we contacted its general manager, John Ford. "It's a comment on our humanity," he said. "The kind of undergarments we adorn ourselves with reflect societal views, and as society's views change, so do our undergarments." Is that to say you won't be showing us lots of babes in underwear? "Um...we will," reassures Ford.

SUNDAY

Aug. 17



REORDER IN THE COURT

7-9PM
INSIDE NFL FILMS: THE IDOL MAKERS (TBS, TV-G) A *National Geographic Explorer* segment, filmed at Super Bowl XXXI, that seeks to discern the magic behind those strangely poetic pigskin reels.

8-8:30PM
3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN (NBC, TV-PG) Feeling inadequate in her relationship with Mr. Randell, Sally looks to Dick and Dr. Albright for advice. Meanwhile, Harry looks for love via video dating. (R)

9-10PM
THE X-FILES (Fox, TV-14) Part 1 of last season's "black cancer" plot reunites Mulder with the evil Krycek and finds him schlepping off to Russia to do battle with some post-Cold Warriors. (R)

9-10:30PM*
THE UNKNOWN MARX BROTHERS (PBS) A supposed highlight of PBS' summer pledge drive (complete with two hat-passing intermissions), the documentary is more bait and switch than carrot on the stick. Despite its promising title, it's a pretty prosaic affair, offering a few previously unseen clips from the Brothers' career but pretty much hewing to the official history. Plus it gives shockingly short shrift to their filmmaking years

8-10PM
TWELVE ANGRY MEN (Showtime, TV-14) William Friedkin's remake of the 1957 courtroom classic features a can't-miss premise—a lone juror tries to persuade 11 others not to convict a murder defendant—and an impressively eclectic cast. Jack Lemmon (as the conscience-stricken holdout) and *The Preacher's Wife's* Courtney B. Vance (as the levelheaded foreman) fare best, but Tony Danza (as a malade salesman!) and *Forrest Gump's* Mykelti Williamson (as a former Muslim) seem out of their depth next to old pros like Hume Cronyn and George C. Scott. Still, it's worth watching for Lemmon, who's every bit as good as Henry Fonda was in the same role 40 years ago. B+ —BF

while lingering ponderously on Groucho, Chico, and Harpo's often sad '50s and '60s TV work.
C —Mike Flaherty

*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

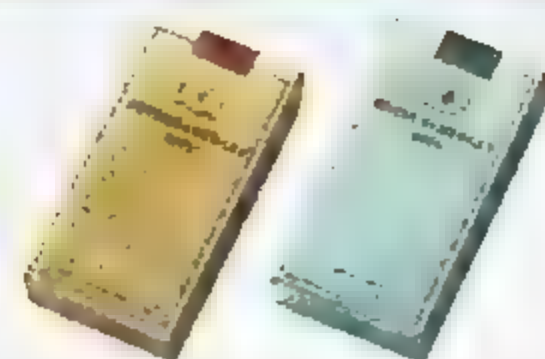
9-11PM
BYZANTIUM: THE LOST EMPIRE (The Learning Channel, TV-G) A four-part history (airing through Aug. 20) of the opulent pre-medieval civilization that served as a gateway from ancient to modern as well as from East to West.

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A MOMENT OF PLEASURE
WITH THE 100MM CIGARETTE



GENTLEMAN'S CALLING: Kramer directs Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in 1967's *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*

The Mild One

Producer-director Stanley Kramer gave us a defiant Marlon Brando and a sparring Hepburn and Tracy during his Oscar-filled career, but his courtly new memoir belies the passion of his films. **by Steve Daly**

BY THE TIME HE MADE the wretched 1977 conspiracy thriller *The Domino Principle*—his last picture to date—filmmaker Stanley Kramer was barely connecting the dots. Sniffed at by Andrew Sarris—"His very ineptness has become encrusted with tradition," wrote the auteurist critic—and abandoned by audiences, he'd strayed far from his broad, commercial showman's instincts.

And what instincts they were: As a producer, Kramer

first clicked by casting Kirk Douglas to superb effect in the boxing exposé *Champion* (1949). He rehabilitated Gary Cooper's career with the Western classic *High Noon* (1952), gave Marlon Brando an exploitation hit with *The Wild One* (1954), and showcased Humphrey Bogart as the paranoid Captain Queeg in *The Caine Mutiny* (1954). Restless to keep greater control of his creative vision, Kramer then upped the ante

by both producing and directing such star-studded "message" movies as *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *On the Beach* (1959), *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), *Ship of Fools* (1965), and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), his biggest hit. Over those 10 heady years, though, the I-can-do-it-all approach burned him out. After 1968, Kramer's knack for garnering either box office success or Oscar glory (his films

won 15 Oscars on 85 nominations) dried up, and his career went into eclipse.

But hey, three decades later, here comes the sun. At the age of 84, Kramer has brought forth, with coauthor Thomas M. Coffey, a breezy new career memoir, *A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World: A Life in Hol-*

lywood. This is, of course, a name-brand nod to Kramer's 1963 mega-farce, the cameo-crammed road picture (everyone from Sid Caesar to Buster Keaton to Jerry Lewis to the Three Stooges) that indirectly inspired Steven Spielberg's similarly gargantuan and even more unfunny *1941*.

Not that you'll find a shred of such historical analysis from Kramer about his impact



NEW IN PAPERBACK

FERGIE: HER SECRET LIFE Allan Starkie (Avon, \$5.99) The duchess of York tried unsuccessfully to have this book, detailing her stormy affair with John Bryan, banned in Britain.

SONGS IN ORDINARY TIME Mary McGarry Morris (Penguin, \$13.95) Set in 1960 Vermont, this panoramic novel explores the broken promises and small-town dreams of the troubled Fermyole family and their neighbors.

on movies—or any substantive talk of fellow directors he admired, either. This is mainly a dear-diary affair, dutifully trotting through the years, cast lists, script battles, and, always, the budgets—a mercantile focus that's perhaps the most modern thing about Kramer's otherwise rigid, gentlemanly sensibility. Out of step with these dish-minded times, he tediously commends actors as "competent" and "capable," "fully deserving" of his "highest regard," "respect," "admiration," and "affection." Is this tact or a low-wattage memory at work? Hard to say.

Yet given the sheer volume of first-rank stars that Kramer hired over the years—including Grace Kelly, Kirk Douglas, Cary Grant, José Ferrer, Sidney Poitier, and Vivien Leigh, among others—the odd insightful observation does bubble up. Picture, for instance, Robert Mitchum, Frank Sinatra, and

Broderick Crawford playing interns on the set of the mediocre medical drama *Not as a Stranger* (1955), brazenly leering at and pinching the backside of nurse Olivia de Havilland. "The things they said and did to her were common on many movie sets in those days," remarks Kramer. "Today, you could land in prison." The most sustained and amusing insights come in a final chapter about the making of *Coming to Dinner*. "Spencer liked to make fun of [Kate's] New England accent," Kramer recalls. "One day...he said, 'Kate, why don't you talk like a person? You talk like you've got a feather up your a—.'"

Had he dusted off more than just a smattering of such uproarious behind-the-scenes exchanges, Kramer's *Mad World* might have seemed a bigger, merrier place. But this feels less like a sweeping portrait of Hollywood than a visit to a small, self-involved satellite—Planet Kramer. A sense of adventure or scope or genuine camaraderie with his film crews is elusive, lost amid constant tott-ings up of bucks and statuettes and even more constant self-flagellations over the movies that bombed (including *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T*, the 1953 fantasy that became Kra-

mer's "most horrendous flop"). Make no mistake, there's pleasure in sizing up Kramer's wide-angle overview. Just don't expect many cutaways to close-ups. **B-**

BETWEEN THE LINES



CUNANAN

■ **SIX DEGREES OF LOUIS BEGLEY:** Katie Couric revealed on *Today* that late spree killer Andrew Cunanan had been spotted leafing through Louis Begley's book *About Schmidt* in Miami. This suggests he may have been familiar with Begley's earlier work *As Max Saw It*. Begley fans know that *As Max Saw It* features a gay character who commits suicide (like Cunanan!) and who owns a home on Lake Como (like Versace!). Here are some other alleged murderers orbiting around the novelist: • Begley is pals with Mary Jo White—the U.S. attorney responsible for prosecuting the...*World Trade Center* bombers. • Begley works at the same firm as attorney Stephen Friedman, who is married to Little, Brown editorial director Frederica Friedman, who is publishing the memoirs of Paula Barbieri, who was intimately involved with...*O.J. Simpson*. • Begley was president of PEN, whose membership includes Norman Mailer, who spent quality time with...serial killer *Gary Gilmore*. You can draw your own conclusions.

■ **BOY TROUBLE:** Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia*, the bible on troubled girls, has been a Ballantine paperback best-seller for more than two years. So it was only a matter of time before a book for troubled boys came along. Or two books. Or possibly four. Random House has paid a rumored \$500,000 for *Rescuing Ophelia's Brothers: Hearing Boys' Voices*, while sister imprint Ballantine has proffered the same for *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (Pipher has nothing to do with either title). "It's a mess," says an editor at a rival house. "They're both going to be calling the *Today* show and trying to book their authors for the same reasons." Meanwhile, two other proposals are circulating—*Teenage Boys: A Species of Their Own* and *The Secret World of Boys*.

■ **RADICAL CHEEK:** *Bonfire of the Vanities* author Tom Wolfe has a new release from Bantam Doubleday Dell, but it's not his long-awaited "next novel." Taking a chapter from J.D. Salinger's nonbook, Wolfe is recycling a novella entitled "Ambush at Fort Bragg"—previously published in *Rolling Stone*—in audio-book form, with *Primal Fear* star Edward Norton (a fave of Wolfe's) narrating. Bantam Audio prez Jenny Frost claims this is the first major author book on tape without simultaneous print publication; she's ordered 80,000 copies. —Alexandra Jacobs, Matthew Flamm, Vanessa V. Friedman

PRIMAL VOICE: Edward Norton

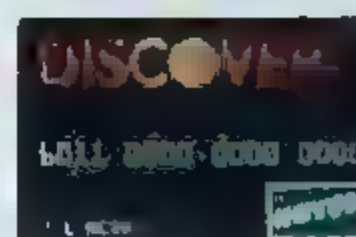
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MUSIC
DISCOVER
STYLE

it pays to



The Week

Nonfiction

DEAR ERNEST AND JULIO: THE ORDINARY GUY'S SEARCH FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY JOB Fred Grimes (*St. Martin's, \$10.95*) Fred Grimes—pseudonym for journalist David Freed—is a recently unemployed factory worker looking for a "great job," and preferably one he's entirely unqualified for. So the hapless, big-dreaming bloke offers his services as fashion model to Calvin Klein, errand boy to Barbara Eden, bodyguard to the Clintons' cat, and dozens more oddball positions—with all correspondence, including grave rejection letters, compiled here. An affable effort that deserves the praise bestowed by the director of the U.S. Mint: "Thank you for your entertaining letter." **B** —Megan Harlan

MY AMERICAN CENTURY Studs Terkel (*The New Press, \$25*) Terkel, the genial Chicago author, actor, and radio legend, isn't a great writer, but he's something possibly rarer, a great listener, coaxing memories and anecdotes out of people that sum up an era or a way of life. This collection of excerpts from his eight books of oral history amounts to an informal epic of Terkel's near century (he was born in 1912). The cumulative effect of the book is nostalgic—distilled essence of union halls, folk ballads, protest marches, farms and factories, a vanished pre-celebrity popular culture. The Depression-era stories of a con artist-gangster, a former hobo, a tycoon, an Iowa farmer, and a society photographer, for instance, convey the

America of the 1930s with a cinematic vividness that tells you more than a shelf of standard history books. **A-** —L.S. Klepp

THE ALBUM COVER ART OF SOUNDTRACKS Frank Jastfelder and Stefan Kassel (*Little, Brown, \$29.95*) All right, annoying audiophiles, one more reason to mourn all capacious 12 inches of your beloved LP: It was such a grand way to take home the "look" and "feel" of a movie. Not only were soundtrack composers like Henry Mancini much better than today's saccharine John Williamses, but the disc jacket provided a superior canvas for poster art—often, with its Pucci colors and cut-'n'-paste shapes, more creative than the flicks it advertised. Check out Saul Bass' herky-jerky designs for Hitchcock and Preminger; marvel at how an entire era can be so readily conjured up by a single typeface. **A** —AJ

Fiction

EIGHT MONTHS ON GHAZZAH STREET Hilary Mantel (*Holt, \$12*) Thirtyish cartographer Frances Shore knew that "women's decisions did not operate" in fundamentalist Islamic Saudi Arabia, where she nevertheless moves with her husband on a lucrative construction project. But legally forbidden to work, drive, or travel alone, Frances starts losing her sense of self. The stifling atmosphere turns menacing when she hears sobbing in the vacant upstairs apartment—and her polite Arab neighbors and hard-partying expat acquaintances tell her she is



BOX OFFICE RECORDS: Soundtrack jackets get a rerelease in *Cover Art*

imagining the sounds. Mantel intertwines a violent conspiracy tale with a nuanced, psychological portrait of a woman learning to trust her own eyes and ears. **A-** —MH

THE BURGLAR IN THE LIBRARY Lawrence Sanders (*Dutton, \$23.95*) The eighth in Block's whimsical series of Bernie Rhodenbarr mysteries finds its light-fingered protagonist marooned during a blizzard at an upscale New York inn. Having repaired to Cutlerford House in the hopes of pilfering a Raymond Chandler first edition, Rhodenbarr becomes a reluctant witness to a series of terribly silly murders. All the stock characters are on hand: suspicious servants, a retired British

colonel, a pair of nosy spinsters, an irritatingly precocious child, and a cat named Raffles. The wittily diverting result is rather like an Agatha Christie novel narrated by Basil Fawlty, or a game of Clue organized by Monty Python. **B+** —Gene Lyons

ALREADY DEAD Denis Johnson (*HarperCollins, \$25*) There's a plot lodged somewhere in this behemoth of a novel, but grasping it is like eating Jell-O with a fork. The dissolute son of a wealthy landowner, Nelson Fairchild Jr., plans the murder of his wife, Winona, but when his scheme fails and he goes into hiding, his hitman marries Winona. Johnson, however, forgets to tell us why we should

INNOVATION OF THE WEEK

'Lefty: A HAND-Book for Left-Handed Kids'

Touting itself as the first book ever bound on the right, this Planet Dexter release—published to coincide with International Left-handers' Day on Aug. 13—"outs" Julia Roberts, Whoopi Goldberg, and Brad Pitt as...southpaws.



care about Fairchild or the other shadowy eccentrics whose drug deals, love affairs, and trance channelings pepper this sprawling narrative. From his attempt to fuse Faulknerian interior monologues with hard-boiled dialogue to his stab at cataloging all manner of California kooks, Johnson (*Jesus' Son*) has bitten off more than he can chew here. *Already Dead* is

400-plus pages of wickedly seductive prose all dressed up with nowhere—and everywhere—to go. **B-** —Margot Mifflin

TALK OF ANGELS Kate O'Brien (*Hyperion, \$12.95*) Revived by an upcoming Miramax film version, this 1936 novel offers a rare glimpse of Irish Catholic feminism. Banned in Ireland for its straightforward portrayal of lesbianism (not to mention unrepentant adultery and female independence), this semi-autobiographical story features a provincial young woman who spends a year as a governess in pre-civil war Spain after her fiancé postpones their marriage. Mary Lavelle opens herself up to Spain, learning the language, attending a bullfight, and ultimately falling in love with the married eldest son of her aristocratic employer—experiences that will make it impossible for her to return to the life of a dutiful Irish Catholic wife. **B+** —Rhonda Johnson

SOUL KISS Shay Youngblood (*Riverhead, \$21*) This first novel from poet/playwright Youngblood manages to be both funny and heartbreaking, a bittersweet taste of an African-American girl's coming of age in the '60s. When Mariah Kim Santos' loopy mother, Coral, goes AWOL, leaving her in the care of two maiden aunts, the 7-year-old girl cultivates stability through writing. Making friends, falling in lust, even reaching out to her estranged father, an errant painter named Matisse, Mariah has one ambition: "I want to make words so delicious that people will want to eat them." With *Soul Kiss*, Youngblood has done just that: The sensation of reading this shimmering novel is like savoring the taste of summer fruit on the tongue. **A** —Dancer Steffens

THE BROWSER

Opening lines from recently published books

"Through a chink in the bedroom curtains my unenthralled eye caught an early-morning glimpse of the New Year: It looked battleship-grey. As I reluctantly swung out of bed I noticed my feet—never something on which I like to dwell. They appeared to be crumbling, sandstone monuments." From *My Name Escapes Me: The Diary of a Retiring Actor*, by ALICIA GUINNESS (Viking, \$23.95)

"Today was the happiest day of my life so far, even though it didn't include actual sex or the World Series." From *Men* by David Shields (Simon & Schuster, \$25.95)

BEST-SELLERS

'MOUNTAIN' CLIMBING

A FIRST NOVEL clambering onto best-seller lists is a rare enough event. A first novel clambering onto best-seller lists sans Imus or Winfrey endorsement—now you're talking true achievement. A rousing hurrah, then, for Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, the Hemingwayesque Civil War saga about a weary soldier trudging back to his beloved. (It's got all those big, noble themes: love, honor...) Apparently that oft-mourned, yet clearly still quite potent commodity—bookseller enthusiasm—is what hoisted the tome over the top. It's returned to press 11 times, for an in-print total of 315,500, and shows no sign of slackening momentum. *Mountain*: Get out of its way!



FICTION

	WEEKS ON LIST
1 UNNATURAL EXPOSURE Patricia Cornwell, Putnam, \$25.95	2
2 PLUM ISLAND Nelson DeMille, Warner, \$25	10
3 COLD MOUNTAIN Charles Frazier, Atlantic Monthly, \$24	6
4 SPECIAL DELIVERY Danielle Steel, Delacorte, \$18.95	5
5 THE PARTNER John Grisham, Doubleday, \$26.95	22
6 FAT TUESDAY Sandra Brown, Warner, \$24	7
7 THE NOTEBOOK Nicholas Sparks, Warner, \$16.95	41
8 LONDON Edward Rutherfurd, Crown, \$25.95	10
9 CHASING CEZANNE Peter Mayle, Knopf, \$23	9
10 UP ISLAND Anne Rivers Siddons, HarperCollins, \$25	9

NONFICTION

1 ANGELA'S ASHES Frank McCourt, Scribner, \$24	45
2 INTO THIN AIR Jon Krakauer, Villard, \$24.95	14
3 MIRACLE CURES Jean Carper, HarperCollins, \$25	2
4 SIMPLE ABUNDANCE Sarah Ban Breathnach, Warner, \$17.95	70
5 THE BIBLE CODE Michael Drosnin, Simon & Schuster, \$25	7
6 THE PERFECT STORM Sebastian Junger, Norton, \$24.95	8
7 THE GIFT OF FEAR Gavin de Becker, Little, Brown, \$22.95	6
8 BRAIN DROPPINGS George Carlin, Hyperion, \$19.95	7
9 CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD, BOOK I Neale Donald Walsch, Putnam, \$19.95	29
10 MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL John Berendt, Random House, \$24	129

MASS-MARKET PAPERBACKS

1 EXECUTIVE ORDERS Tom Clancy, Berkley, \$7.99	2
2 THE THIRD TWIN Ken Follett, Fawcett Crest, \$7.99	4
3 CONTACT Carl Sagan, Pocket, \$6.99	3
4 THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN Jacquelyn Mitchard, Signet, \$7.50	8
5 DESPERATION Stephen King, Signet, \$7.99	4
6 FINDING THE DREAM Nora Roberts, Jove, \$6.99	3
7 THE RUNAWAY JURY John Grisham, Dell/Island, \$7.99	28
8 ONE RED ROSE Julie Garwood, Pocket, \$2.99	3
9 DR. ATKINS' NEW DIET REVOLUTION Robert C. Atkins, M.D., Avon, \$6.50	28
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MONSTRUM

DONALD JAMES

Going to 'Pieces,' Again

Now that 1995's *Pieces of You* is being reissued as a two-LP set, we thought it was time to reappraise Jewel. The vinyl exam shows she still has a lot to learn. **by David Browne**

ROCK CRITICS MAY NOT always share the tastes and sensibilities of the average citizen, but here's one example where the twain did indeed meet. Like 95 percent of the population, I paid little mind to Jewel's first album, *Pieces of You*, when it was released in February 1995. I have no qualms about singer-songwriters—plop me down with anything by Paul Simon, Suzanne Vega, Sandy Denny, or the sadly missed Jeff Buckley, and I'm happy as a clam (albeit a depressed clam). But from its whiff of self-righteousness to its coffeehouse-waif ambience, *Pieces of You* felt as precious as Jewel Kilcher's own abbreviated stage name. After playing it twice, I dutifully filed it away. When a coworker attended a Jewel concert and reported that one highlight was her yodeling, I sensed I'd made the right decision.

Unless you stowed aboard the Pathfinder expedition to Mars, you surely know the Jewel story didn't end there. A year and a half after the LP's release, propelled by relentless touring and videos that highlighted Jewel's grabbiest songs and her ingenue looks, the buzz began. *Pieces of You* has since become one of those talked-out, must-own albums, taking up residence in the *Billboard* top 10 and landing Jewel on the cover of *Time*. To cement the album's status (and eke out a few more dollars), on July 29 Atlantic Records issued a limited-edition version of *Pieces of*

You on two vinyl LPs, with five previously unreleased tracks as added enticement. Clearly a revisit was in order.

Jewel's good fortune can be attributed to many things—timing, glamour, showmanship, and, above all, star power. Charisma isn't a given for folkies, but Jewel has it. On stage, constantly pressing her blond hair behind her ears, she's a strumming contradiction, confident yet ditsy. The one factor that shouldn't have worked in her favor is her own album. *Pieces of You* remains a wimpily produced batch of songs—so ineffectual that both "Who Will Save Your Soul?" and "You Were Meant for Me" had to be rerecorded for release as singles. It's best considered as a guided tour through three decades of female folk-pop styles. "Near You Always" is *Blue*-era Joni Mitchell; "Foolish Games," pure Kate Bush; "I'm Sensitive," Vega with a lobotomy.

That wouldn't be so bad if the women who populate her songs weren't such simps. Men leave them, treat them indifferently, or, in "Painters," die on them—and the female narrators simply absorb the blows like the wounded birds they are. When Jewel ventures into social commentary, it's embarrassing. "Adrian" is a movie-of-the-week about a coma boy; "Pieces of You," her take on society's superficial

values, becomes unintentionally hilarious when she coos, "Oh, Jew, oh, Jew." (Let's not mention the liner-note poems, which read like high school lit-magazine entries.)

Like many an introverted balladeer before her, Jewel

ty. The *Time* cover acknowledged not only Jewel's success but the breakout success of the all-women Lilith Fair tour, on which she's making periodic appearances. Jewel wasn't at the Lilith show I caught, yet even without her presence, it was clear she's among the most lightweight of the pack. She lacks the political passion of Tracy Chapman, the neurotic-prodigy angst of Fiona Apple, and the thirtysomething wariness of Sarah McLachlan (not to mention the hardened sass of Sheryl Crow).

Instead, Jewel revels in traits Lilith seems to downplay—girlishness, vulnerability, and sex. "Rocker Girl" and "Cold Song," two other extra tracks on the *Pieces of You* LP, are toss-off novelties about cuddling with cute guys. Another new song, "V-12 Cadillac" which will see its debut on the forthcoming *MOM II: Music for Our Mother Ocean* benefit album, is a throwaway white blues about flirting with surfer dudes. At a time when women pop stars are springing ahead into new turf both musically and lyrically, Jewel knows that every generation still needs its symbol of delicate flowerhood, wandering wide-eyed through life. Let's just hope she's growing wiser as well as older—and that she continues to leave yodeling off her records. *Pieces of You* expanded edition: **C+**

gleams brightest when she chronicles unrequited love. "Near You Always" finds her trying to keep her distance from the object of her affection so she won't fall back in love, and anyone who's been in such a situation can relate to that sort of pain. "Everything Breaks," the best of the five bonus tracks, continues the vibe, with a stronger delivery. And "You Were Meant for Me" chronicles a suddenly single life (making breakfast for one, for instance) with deft strokes lacking in her other numbers.

Pieces of You, then, remains a very mixed bag—yet the factors that make much of it so cringe inducing also lie at the heart of Jewel's populari-




'Trigger' Effect

Following an unjustly ignored debut album, the *Gun*-toting Trynin's finally got our attention



Jen Trynin

JEN TRYNIN ISN'T just having a little phallic fun with the title of *Gun Shy Trigger Happy*. She's putting a cap on an album's worth of canny mixed emotions about the opposite sex—wondering out loud why longing and seduction always seem more satisfying than consummation and security, casting herself not just as victim but perp, a romantic who's as fine a commit-



ment-phobe as any man she's met. Fortunately, Trynin manages to turn these tentative romantic ambiguities into great, forcefully argued rock & roll. *Gun Shy's* clinkerless 13 tracks may be the year's best guitar-bass-drums-vox pop.

At her crankiest, this 33-year-old, guitar-slinging Bostonian recalls Chrissie Hynde's righteous rock sneer, but she just as easily



MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSTONIAN: Jen emerges from the Alanis black hole

slips into beautifully breathy passages that suggest *Dusty in Memphis* on steroids. Two years ago, her major-label bow had the unfortunate distinction of coming out almost simultaneously with label mate Alanis Morissette's. But

if at first you don't explode, Trynin, Trynin again. Fans of smart, feisty, tender hooks can only hope a follow-up that waxes so expert on the fleeting nature of attraction doesn't get lost in the fleet itself. **A** —Chris Willman

BACKSTREET BOYS: FLORIDA'S PREFAB SPROUTS TAKE ROOT

THE ORLANDO MAGIC

S PICE BOYS. Monkees '87. New Kids on the Block: The Sequel. Industry wags are having big fun coming up with snide nicknames for the Backstreet Boys, five comely lads who are the latest contenders in pop's long procession of prefabricated singing groups. But with their current single, "Quit Playing Games (With My Heart)," sitting at No. 3 on *Billboard's* pop chart and their eponymous American debut album shipping gold this week, the Boys are taking the gibes in stride.

"Yeah, people will look at us and see an automatic stereotype," sighs Howie Dorough, 23. "But once they hear us, they'll know we're for real."

While their R&B-tinged pop fits comfortably alongside Hanson and the Spice Girls on the airwaves, the Backstreet Boys (who are managed by former New Kids on the Block tour manager Johnny Wright) have

actually been around longer than either of those groups. Formed in Orlando, Fla., in 1993, the Backstreet Boys—whose members range in age from 17 to 25—released their first single, "We've Got It Goin' On," in September 1995. Although America



LOCAL BOYS MAKE GOOD: (Clockwise from top left) McLean, Littrell, Dorough, Richardson, and Carter

responded with a shrug, the group went on to become international superstars, inspiring fan clubs in Asia, Europe, and Canada, and selling more than 5 million copies of their debut album worldwide.

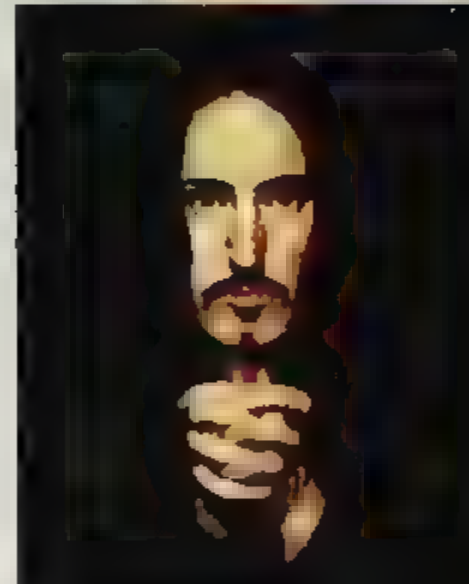
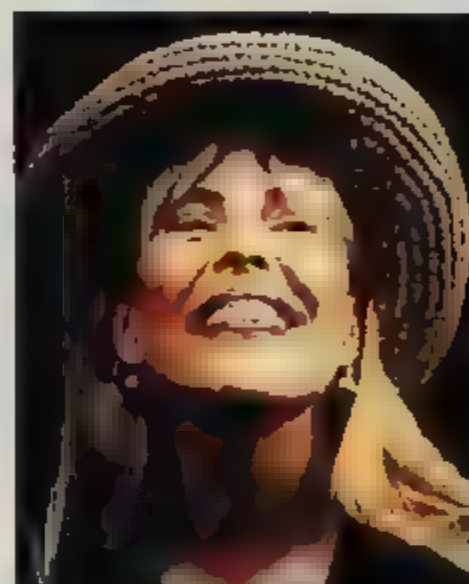
"People think we're from London or someplace," says Brian Littrell, 22. "But now it's time to come home. It's important to us to be recognized here."

Although early indications are that the Boys will replicate their overseas success Stateside, they confess to having reservations about some of the more crass trappings of stardom, including several marketing plans. "TV cartoons, bedsheets, dolls....I don't know about all that," says Kevin Richardson, 25. "There is such a thing as oversaturation." One idea to which they give a thumbs-up is the Backstreet Boys comic book, which the group's resident sketch artist, Nick Carter, 17, has been working on. The sci-fi story line, he says, involves "each of us developing a power, like mutants, and battling a group of aliens who are trying to take over the world through music." Guess we'll see you in the funny papers, boys. —Tom Sinclair

IN THE WORKS

**SAINT JONI;
TRENT STRIKE**

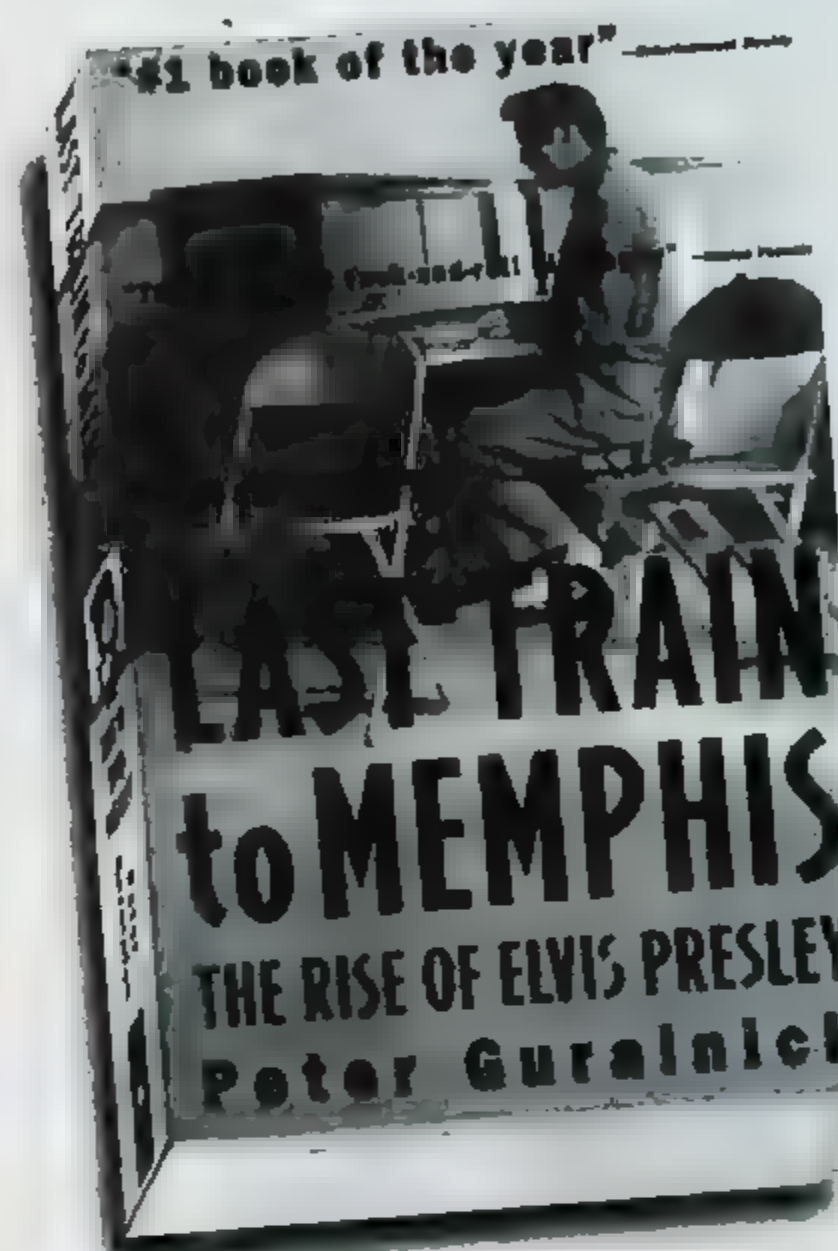
JONESIN' FOR JONI: Just how admired is Joni Mitchell by her contemporaries? Ever since word got out that Reprise was planning a Mitchell tribute album, swarms of the singer-songwriter's superstar fans have been pleading to be included on the project. "It's been



WITH NAIL AND (2)
Mitchell (top): Reznor

NAILIN' IT DOWN: Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor, currently bunkered in a New Orleans funeral home that's been converted into a recording studio, says the next NIN album (due in early '98) will hold a few surprises for fans of the band's patented raise-the-dead cacophony. "I'm trying to get out of the confined guitar-bass-drum rock-band formula," says Reznor, who's working with a collaborator, NIN guitarist Danny Lohner, for the first time. Although he's been soaking his ears in techno, Reznor says the new material "doesn't sound like what's happening in clubs now—I'm trying to make an old Prince record, I think." —*DB*

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The Week

Singles

AQUA "Barbie Girl" (MCA) There must be something in that Northern European water. Like recent tunes by their Swedish-pop counterparts Ace of Base and the Cardigans, these Danish newcomers' frothy debut is fun, fun, fun—but oh so disposable. It's intended as commentary on vapid chicks, but the tune's tinny vocals and techno-lite production sound as inane as what the foursome is dissing. **C** —Jeremy Helligar

Pop/Rock

ANDREW DORFF Hint of Mess (The Work Group) Dorff's debut opens with a propulsive number called "Supercool," which is precisely what the singer-songwriter (and kid brother of indie film staple Stephen Dorff) aims to be. There are some appealing musical ideas (the folksy, hip-hopping swing of "Too Far Underground"), but Dorff's mush-mouthed delivery makes him sound less like an innovative upstart than some boozed-up novelty act. **B-** —JH

SWV Release Some Tension (RCA) Unlike their sophomore entry—which was stifled by too many vocal rearrangements and overuse

of a funky-yodel gimmick that was the R&B lick of 1996—this third effort finds the sistas lifting their voices with rollicking dexterity and torchy soul, returning to what got them their multi-platinum status. Hip-hop phenoms Sean "Puffy" Combs, Missy Elliott, and Redman add street cred and pop velocity. **B+** —Cheo Tyehimba

SPECTRUM Forever Alien (Reprise) "We practice and demonstrate all sounds and their generation," intones a cartoonishly British voice in "The New Atlantis." The claim is far from accurate—in reality, this vehicle for Spacemen 3 alum Peter Dinklage seems to rely mainly on a comparatively limited sonic palette of Moog synthesizers and theremins. But for druggy gurgles, whirs, and bleeps, Spectrum excel. **B** —Ethan Smith

MORRISSEY Maladjusted (Mercury) Morrissey has always been a whiner who believes his every gripe is of global significance; his brilliance is in his ability to make that self-pity affecting and humorous. He doesn't stray much here lyrically, but his backing band's music lacks the bounce of say, 1994's *Vauxhall & I*. Even his trademark charm can't rescue these heavy-handed arrangements. **C** —Rob O'Connor



OH, BROTHER: Stephen Dorff's younger sib, Andrew, makes quite a Mess

BUZZ OF THE WEEK

Alanis Morissette

Timber! On an upcoming CD, musical cutups the Texas Chainsaw

Orchestra remake "You Oughta Know"—and six other tunes—using power saws instead of traditional instruments.



GIPSY KINGS Compas (Nonesuch) Heard in mini-mall restaurants everywhere, the France-based Gipsy Kings seized acclaim in the last few years with a Gypsy/flamenco hybrid that goes down easy but buzzes with passion and unplugged rusticity. The story continues on this album of simple, romantic tunes, opening with the dance-feverish "Ami Wa Wa (Solo Por Ti)" and closing with the plaintive ballad "Amor Gitano." Listen to it attentively or as sonic decor: It works either way. **B-** —Josef Woodard

JULIA FORDHAM East West (Virgin) The British chanteuse's fifth album is more starkly produced than previous outings, putting the spotlight squarely on her smoky soprano. Fordham shines on the unabashedly romantic "I Want to Call You Baby," and "More Than I Can Bear" has the airiness of early Joni Mitchell. Lest things get too sleepy, she cuts loose on "Wishing You Well," displaying an emotional range that makes *East West* a chilling tour de force. **B+** —Bob Cannon

KARA'S FLOWERS The Fourth World (Reprise) "I can't find anything to be sad about/They say I'm doomed but I feel fine," chirps frontman Adam Levine on the Brit-pop-peppy cut "Myself." Not exactly the sentiment you'd expect from an 18-year-old L.A. whippersnapper fresh out of depressing high school. But these optimistic, lyrically awkward kids spend 10 more happy tracks turning the tables on lethargic slack-

er cynicism, with Green Day producer Rob Cavallo bridling all that youthful zeal. **B+** —Tom Lanham

PAUL WELLER Heavy Soul (Go! Discs/Island) Because Weller's veddy British former band the Jam never made much of an impact Stateside, his solo albums have been largely ignored here. More's the pity, because this fourth effort may be his best yet. Evoking everyone from Traffic to The Band to Crazy Horse, Weller's organically cohesive tunes stand tall, defiantly out of time. Laugh at his unfashionable sincerity if you must, but *Heavy Soul* is the real goods. **A-** —TS

Soundtracks

VARIOUS ARTISTS Def Jam's How to Be a Player (Def Jam) Featuring an unreleased Tupac track ("Troublesome"), a reunion of the legendary rap duo EPMD ("Never Seen Before"), Rick James' triumphantly funky return ("Hard to Get"), and other slamming jams, *Player* sounds more like the ultimate summer party tape than a soundtrack. Pick to click: Foxy Brown and Dru Hill's "Big Bad Mamma," a groovelicious riff on Carl Carlton's '80s goof "She's a Bad Mama Jama." **A-** —Matt Diehl

Country

SCOTTY MOORE, DJ FONTANA All the King's Men (Sweetfish) Okay, so Moore and Fontana, Elvis' first guitarist and drummer, don't constitute all of his backing musicians—but as two of the most important, they got Steve Earle, Keith Richards, The Band, and others to show what they've learned from these Memphis men. No one dared record an Elvis song, thank goodness, but the mostly new material is scatter-shot: Presley soundalike Ronnie McDowell meanders into kitschy quicksand, as do Ron Wood and Jeff Beck. Still, this is loose and feel-good, and with Joe Louis Walker and the BoDeans on board, dang near inspired. **B** —Allanna Nash

CLINT BLACK Nothin' but the Tail-lights (RCA) Black, who's been as creatively stale as a year-old Communion loaf, hauls out the big guns on his sixth album of new material, writing with Matraca Berg, Marty Stuart, and Steve Wariner; dueting with Martina McBride; and picking with Chet Atkins and Mark Knopfler. Problem is, he needs all that window dressing: Other than the spirited title tune and a bluegrass ballad with Alison Krauss, this is the dullist set of songs since, well, his last album. **C+** —AN

THE CHARTS

SPOILS OF 'WAR'

IT TOOK SERIOUS thuggery to push Sean "Puffy" Combs out of the pop chart's top slot. That came in the form of Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, whose *The Art of War* strong-armed its way to No. 1 with 394,000 in first-week sales. Puff Daddy and his hit factory, who debuted last week with 561,000 copies, dropped to No. 2 with a still-buff 301,000-unit follow-up figure for *No Way Out*. And, at No. 3, *Men in Black* ensured that rap accounted for the win, place, and show spots on the sales chart for the first time this year. Another film soundtrack, *Spawn*, sold 98,000 copies of its metal-electronica collaborations, good enough for a No. 7 *Billboard* birthing.



POP ALBUMS

LAST WEEK		WEEKS ON CHART
1	— BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY <i>The Art of War</i> , Ruthless/Relativity	1
2	1 PUFF DADDY <i>No Way Out</i> , Bad Boy/Arista	2
3	2 SOUNDTRACK <i>Men in Black</i> , Columbia/Sony Music Soundtrax	5
4	3 SPICE GIRLS <i>Spice</i> , Virgin	26
5	4 HANSON <i>Middle of Nowhere</i> , Mercury	13
6	5 SARAH McLACHLAN <i>Surfacing</i> , Arista	3
7	— SOUNDTRACK <i>Spawn</i> , Immortal/Epic	1
8	8 PRODIGY <i>The Fat of the Land</i> , Maverick	5
9	9 MATCHBOX 20 <i>Yourself or Someone Like You</i> , Atlantic	22
10	8 JEWEL <i>Pieces of You</i> , Atlantic	77


R&B ALBUMS

1	— BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY <i>The Art of War</i> , Ruthless/Relativity	1
2	1 PUFF DADDY <i>No Way Out</i> , Bad Boy/Arista	2
3	2 MISSY "MISDEMEANOR" ELLIOTT <i>Supa Dupa Fly</i> , EastWest	4
4	— JOE <i>All That I Am</i> , Jive	1
5	3 GOD'S PROPERTY FROM KIRK FRANKLIN'S HU NATION	11
	<i>God's Property</i> , B-Rite/Interscope	
6	5 MARY J. BLIGE <i>Share My World</i> , MCA	16
7	4 SOUNDTRACK <i>Men in Black</i> , Columbia/Sony Music Soundtrax	5
8	6 MIA X <i>Unlady Like</i> , No Limit/Priority	7
9	8 SOUNDTRACK <i>I'm Bout It</i> , No Limit/Priority	11
10	7 WYCLEF JEAN FEATURING REFUGEE ALLSTARS	6
	<i>The Carnival</i> , Ruthless/Columbia	

MTV VIDEOS

1	3 THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.	3
	"Mo Money, Mo Problems," Bad Boy/Arista	
2	1 WILL SMITH "Men in Black," Columbia/Sony Music Soundtrax	8
3	5 SUBLIME "Wrong Way," MCA	6
4	4 PRODIGY "Breathe," Maverick	8
5	2 THE WALLFLOWERS "The Difference," Interscope	11
6	8 MATCHBOX 20 "Push," Lava/Atlantic	3
7	2 BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY "Look Into My Eyes," Warner Bros.	5
8	14 OMC "How Bizarre," Huh!/Mercury	2
9	10 THIRD EYE BLIND "Semi-Charmed Life," Elektra	7
10	13 SUGAR RAY "Fly," Lava/Atlantic	5

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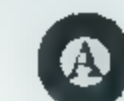


Photo: Bruce Bennett © 1996



Extremities

At 50, Farrah Fawcett reveals her toned self in *All of Me*, but fans will wish she'd held onto her clothes—and self-respect. by Lisa Schwarzbaum

DEFENDERS OF FARRAH Fawcett have claimed she was (a) severely tired; (b) extremely nervous; or (c) knowingly playacting the role of a bird-brain when she appeared on David Letterman's *Late Show* this past June, burbling and meandering so effectively that less sophisticated viewers might be forgiven for thinking

she was in serious distress, or even drugged. Certainly she didn't look tired: The tight black dress she wore showed off a tanned, toned, sex-kitty body unknown in nature to 50-year-old women. In fact, the dazzling, disturbing sight of Fawcett's remarkable physi-

Farrah Fawcett: *All of Me* 1995 PLAYBOY \$19.99 UNRATED

cal self in such harsh discord with her wobbly stage presence was enough to distract those same less sophisticated viewers from the very product the woman was on TV to hawk in the first place: a pay-per-view concoction, just now released for home-video consumption,

called **Farrah Fawcett: All of Me**. I now cradle a tape of this rivetingly depressing, souped-up, soft-core fantasia of self-promotion in my untanned, untanned arms. And I gotta ask: Is this all that's available for our golden poster girl, our athletic Angel, our very own American bit o' honey, now a 50-year-old mother who loves to paint and sculpt but thinks that the only way we would like to see her do it is with her clothes off?

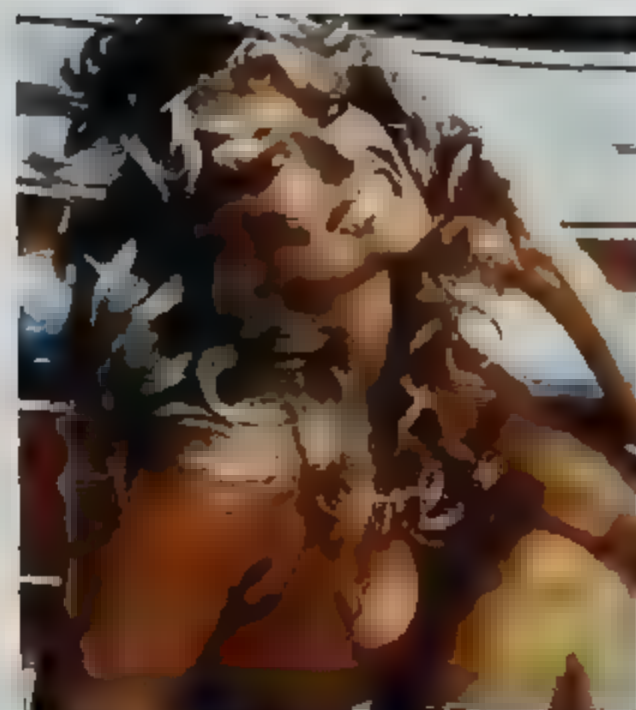
You think I'm going all corny-poetic on you, don't you, all feminist hooey and humor impaired. Well, let me tell you what's in *All of Me*.

First, there's a quick A&E *Biography*-type spin through Farrah's corn-on-the-cob-wholesome Texas childhood and her magical rise to fame: the move to Hollywood, the early gigs, the transformation into the late '70s-early '80s It Girl—that hair, those teeth, those nipples on The Poster. (Critics supplying trenchant commentary include blow-dryer wielder José Eber, bathrobe wearer Hugh Hefner, and culture canny Camille Paglia.)

Then comes a section documenting the photo sessions for Farrah's 1995 *Playboy* naked pictures (this being a *Playboy* video and all), wherein the subject explains why she finally agreed, at age 48, to take off her clothes and expose her permanently attentive breasts; by the end of the shoot she unravels in tears and phones an unknown intimate to report, "I don't like my body, I don't like my hair." It's awful, painful, humiliating, creepy.

Then follows the creative centerpiece: Farrah explains her love of art and demonstrates it, too. First she sculpts a female form with clay she

FARRAH FAWCETT MINOR: The blond bombshell stoops to *All of Me*



POSTER CHILD: Fawcett beamed in her 1973

faced solemnity with which everyone involved participates in what is—come on, guys, be real—a howlingly silly project is, as them *Playboy* honeys like to say, a turnoff. Our Farrah—the gleaming girl of our memory, that radiant exem-

plar of American sunshine—is better than this. Deserves better than this. And if, for whatever reasons, of intractable insecurity, she doesn't know it, then she deserves to have somebody trustworthy and sensible (who doesn't stand to

make a buck off her bod) in her camp. That somebody should tell her that *All of Me* is not all of her, and that there are other roles available to Farrah Fawcett in the next 50 years of her life than smearing paint on her fine bum. **D**

DISNEY'S SUSPECT REPACKAGING

'FANCY FREE' GETS FANCIFUL

JIMINY CRICKET, best known as Pinocchio's conscience, is also the star of the Walt Disney Co.'s best-selling video release *Fun and Fancy Free*. But surely the honest little

mouse would be abashed if he could see the new package. The arketeers have repackaged a pair of unrelated, never rereleased in-selling 1997 video with messings, and not-the-for example: the video's front dusted Mickey Mouse, Don-ho look to be the only here on the jacket will tion of the people who the movie ill the cir-song, and en (father lues and with his arthy and y and the

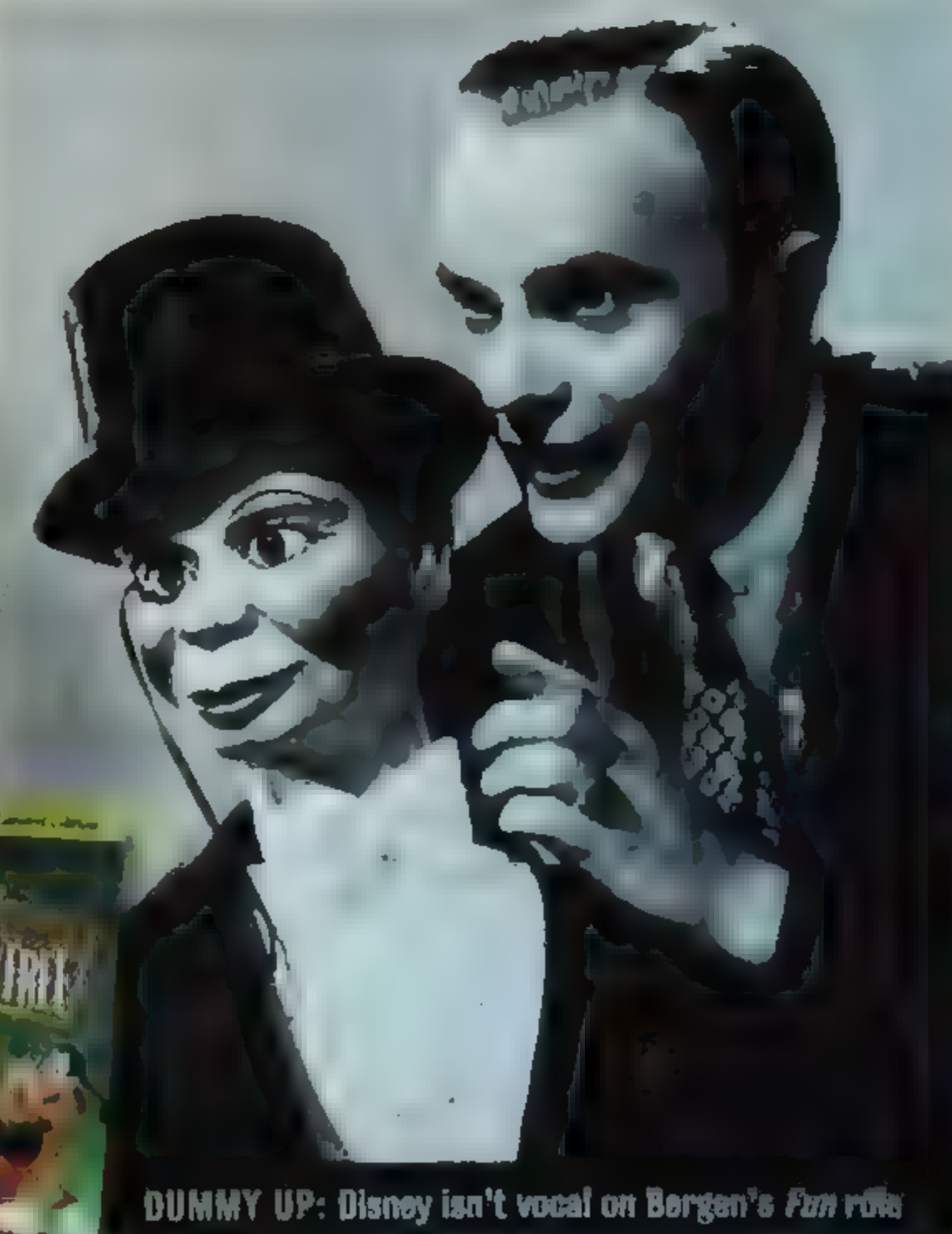
MOUSE. Jacket of was "the ring Walt Mickey

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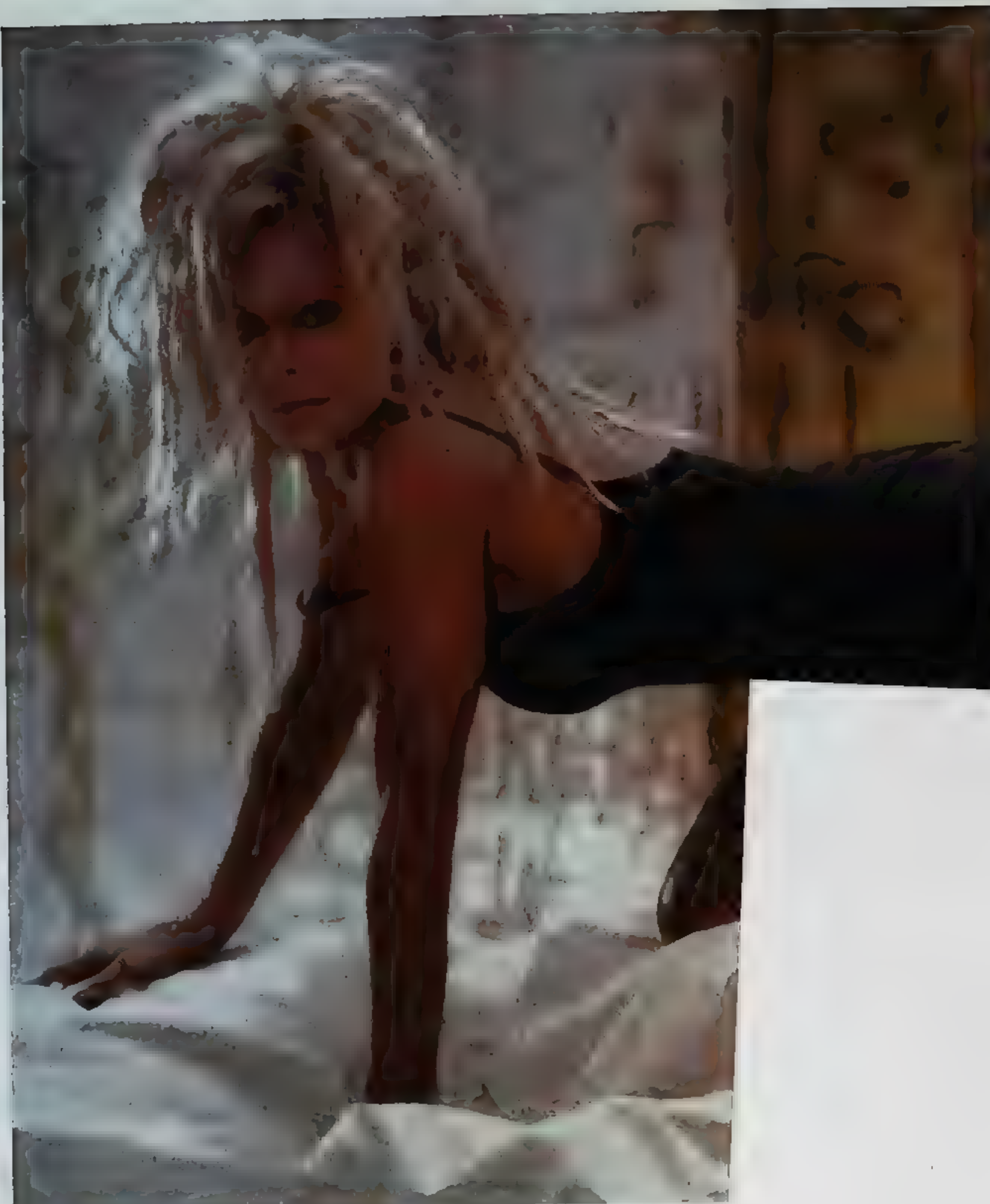
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So who put this video package together—Pinocchio? —Steve Daly



DUMMY UP: Disney isn't vocal on Bergen's *Fun* rolls



Extremities

At 50, Farrah Fawcett reveals her toned self in *All of Me*—and self-respect, by

DEFENDERS OF FARRAH Fawcett have claimed she was (a) severely tired; (b) extremely nervous; or (c) knowingly playacting the role of a bird-brain when she appeared on David Letterman's *Late Show* this past June, burbling and meandering so effectively that less sophisticated viewers might be forgiven for thinking

she was in serious distress, or even drugged. Certainly she didn't look tired: The tight black dress she wore showed off a tanned, toned, sex-kitty body unknown in nature to 50-year-old women. In fact, the dazzling, disturbing sight of Fawcett's remarkable physi-

Farrah Fawcett: *All of Me* 1996 PLAYBOY \$19.99 UNRATED

cal self in such harsh discord with her wobbly stage presence was enough to distract those same less sophisticated viewers from the very product the woman was on TV to hawk in the first place: a pay-per-view concoction, just now released for home-video consumption,

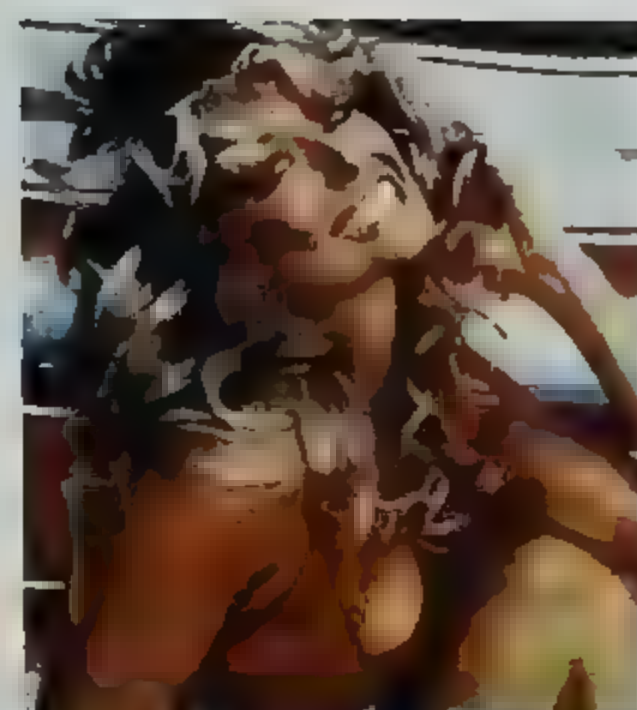
my hair." It's awful, painful, humiliating, creepy.

Then follows the creative centerpiece: Farrah explains her love of art and demonstrates it, too. First she sculpts a female form with clay she

called **Farrah Fawcett: All of Me**. I now cradle a tape of this rivetingly depressing, souped-up, soft-core fantasia of self-promotion in my untanned, un-toned arms. And I gotta ask: Is this all that's available for our golden poster girl, our athletic Angel, our very own American bit o' honey, now a 50-year-old mother who loves to paint and sculpt but thinks that the only way we would like to see her do it is with her clothes off?

You think I'm going all corny-poetic on you, don't you, all feminist hooley and humor impaired. Well, let me tell you what's in *All of Me*.

First, there's a quick A&E *Biography*-type spin through



POSTER CHILD: Fawcett beamed in her 1977 pinup (top) and got grim with Paul LeMat in *Burning Bed*

ends up rubbing all over her naked body. Then she decorates a canvas with images of a female form using paint she ends up rubbing all over her naked body.

Next there's a brief interlude in which the actress avers that the most important acting she has ever done was in the 1983 stage play and 1986 film version of *Extremities* (in which she is abused by a man and gets revenge by torturing him) and the 1984 TV-movie production of *The Burning Bed* (in which she is abused by a man and gets revenge by setting him on fire).

Finally, there's an exotic performance piece during which the star recites verses from the biblical Song of Solomon in a seductive whisper while wearing a black dominatrix wig. When she takes a bow, her robe falls off, revealing (you know what's coming) her naked body.

Look, for all I know, I've made you want to run out and see this thing. Certainly it's never dull. But the straight-

faced solemnity with which everyone involved participates in what is—come on, guys, be real—a howlingly silly project is, as them *Playboy* honeys like to say, a turnoff. Our Farrah—the gleaming girl of our memory, that radiant exem-

plar of American sunshine—is better than this. Deserves better than this. And if, for whatever reasons of intractable insecurity, she doesn't know it, then she deserves to have somebody trustworthy and sensible (who doesn't stand to

make a buck off her bod) in her camp. That somebody should tell her that *All of Me* is not all of her, and that there are other roles available to Farrah Fawcett in the next 50 years of her life than smearing paint on her fine bum. **D**

DISNEY'S SUSPECT REPACKAGING

'FANCY FREE' GETS FANCIFUL

JIMINY CRICKET, best known as Pinocchio's conscience, is also the star of the Walt Disney Co.'s best-selling video release *Fun and Fancy Free*. But surely the honest little cricket would be abashed if he could see the way Disney's marketers have repackaged the 1947 feature film—a pair of unrelated, patched-together stories never rereleased in theaters—into a No. 1-selling 1997 video with the help of some fibs, finessings, and not-the-whole-truth tactics. For example:

■ **THE CAST LIST.** On the video's front dust-jacket picture you'll find Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy, who look to be the only stars of the picture. Nowhere on the jacket will you see or find any mention of the people who actually get top billing in the movie itself: Dinah Shore, who tells the circus-bear story *Bongo* in song, and ventriloquist Edgar Bergen (father of Candice), who introduces and then narrates, along with his dummy pals Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd, a *Mickey and the Beanstalk* fairy tale.

■ **THE MEN BEHIND THE MOUSE.** Much is made on the back jacket of the fact that *Fancy Free* was "the last animated feature starring Walt Disney as the voice of Mickey Mouse." Not until you examine the "commemorative booklet" inside does anybody fess up that in fact a good chunk of Mickey's *Fun* voice tracks were done by sound-effects man Jim Macdonald, who took over for Walt's

squeaky falsetto from this movie onward. The booklet says Walt "no longer had time" to do Mickey; one Disney-published filmography suggests it was equally likely that Walt's heavy smoking had deepened his voice so much that he couldn't summon the requisite pitch.

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DUMMY UP: Disney isn't vocal on Bergen's *Fun* role

Mum's Word

Who better to assess Albert Brooks' *Mother* than Albert Brooks' mother? Thelma Bernstein tells us how creative her youngest son really is.

ALTHOUGH I DON'T FEEL *Mother* (1996, Paramount, PG-13, \$101.99) is about me, the first thing I did after seeing the movie was run to my freezer. Not that I had an eight-pound hunk of cheese in there like the mother in the film, but I must tell you, the next day it was a lot emptier. I do buy ice cream and sherbet in large quantities—I never know if someone's going to come in or if I'm going to need it—and I opened one box and saw a little "protective ice." I couldn't believe it. That box went right down the drain.

Albert called me one day soon after I'd seen the movie, and my call waiting came in, and you know what? I didn't pick it up. Knowing that half the country laughed over the trailer featuring that scene, I just didn't want to deal with it.

The relationship between a son and his mother is a difficult subject to begin with—I can't think of any other movie with that story line—but Albert is so real, and I think that's what comes across.

Albert and I have always had a wonderful relationship, but he's very deep and it's hard to really know what he's thinking. This movie gave me insights into his



DEBBIE DOES THELMA: In *Mother*'s title role, the unsinkable Reynolds gives Brooks some tough love

feelings and has brought us even closer.

I can't think of any reason he would have felt the way he does toward the brother in the film. Albert wasn't jealous when I recently went to visit my middle son, Robert [comedic daredevil Super Dave Osborne], in Canada. And my oldest son, Clifford, is quite brilliant—I always say he's the most brilliant of all. I'm very grateful to have a good relationship with all three of my children.

I feel I've lived so many lives. Well before Albert was born, I was a singing actress. [Brooks' father was the radio comedian Parkyakarkus.] I did a couple of pictures that were on TV a few years ago [*The Toast of New York* and *New Faces of 1937*, using the stage name Thelma Leeds]. Albert never expressed any surprise, but I guess something must have inspired the part in the movie when the son begins to see his mother as who she is—as a person, not just his mother.

Debbie Reynolds did a beautiful job as the mother. I was so sorry she wasn't nominated for an Oscar because she played the part with such restraint and in such a loving way, she was absolutely perfect. I think because she wasn't her old boisterous self, people didn't realize what she had accomplished. Debbie was cute in real life, too—she kept saying we should get Albert and Carrie [Reynolds' daughter, Carrie Fisher] together.

Although he claims to have women trouble in the movie, Albert has dated more than I know. I once told him, "I'd like to see you married before I die." Thank God he's happily married now. *Mother* is about a man who believes he must figure out his relationship with his mother before he can enter into a lasting relationship with a woman, and Albert got engaged right after shooting this movie. Isn't that the funniest thing? **A+++** —as told to Lois Alter Mark



MY THREE SONS: L. to r., Robert Einstein, Brooks, Bernstein, and Clifford Einstein at a 1993 wedding



The optimist sees the glass as half full.



The pessimist sees the glass as half empty.



The Wrangler owner sees the glass on an angle with its contents spilling over the cup holders, onto the carpet, and down through the drainage holes.

THE ALL-NEW JEEP WRANGLER

It's no surprise that people who drive the all-new '97 Jeep Wrangler see the world from a different point of view.

After all, when you've got a



4x4 that can take you almost anywhere in the world, your outlook on life is bound to change.

Part of the credit goes to Wrangler's new exclusive Quadra-Coil™ suspension system that provides excellent traction and handling.

Then there's Wrangler's engine. It's the only available 6-cylinder engine in its class, and the most powerful too.* To change the way you view the world, call 1-800-925-JEEP. Or you can always visit our Web site at <http://www.jeepunpaved.com>

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THERE'S ONLY ONE

*Wrangler SE shown. 4.0 litre engine not available on Wrangler SE, standard on Wrangler Sport and Sahara. Ward's 1996 Small Sport Utility class. Always wear your seat belt. Rearward-facing child seats cannot be used in the SE model without the available rear seat. Jeep is a registered trademark of Chrysler Corporation.

**NOW THERE'S ALLEGRA™. THE PRESCRIPTION
SEASONAL ALLERGY MEDICINE THAT LETS YOU GET OUT THERE.**

Catch some air like never before this allergy season. Because this season, there's Allegra.

Only you know how miserable your seasonal nasal allergies can be—and how some medicines can make you feel. That's why Allegra was made to give you nondrowsy relief from symptoms like sneezing, runny nose, and watery, itchy eyes, but lets you feel like yourself.

In fact, in tests conducted by allergists, drowsiness in people who took Allegra was similar to placebo (sugar pill), 1.3% vs 0.9%. The most commonly reported adverse experiences for Allegra

and placebo are cold or flu (2.5% vs 1.5%), nausea (1.6% vs 1.5%), and menstrual pain (1.5% vs 0.3%).

And Allegra is safe to take as prescribed—one capsule, twice a day for people 12 and over. Most important of all, its effectiveness doesn't wear off as the day wears on.

So discover what it takes to really get out there this year. Ask your doctor about Allegra. You just may find that this season you're going for it in ahhh totally cool way.

And check out our website at <http://www.ahhh-allegra.com>.

Please see additional important information on adjacent page.

This allergy season, live with ahhhbandon.

Ahhh! Allegra!

allegra™
fexofenadine HCl 60 mg

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Brief Summary of
Prescribing Information as of October 1996

ALLEGRA™ (fexofenadine hydrochloride) Capsules 60 mg

INDICATIONS AND USAGE
ALLEGRA™ is indicated for the relief of symptoms associated with seasonal allergic rhinitis in adults and children 12 years of age and older. Symptoms treated effectively include sneezing, rhinorrhea, itchy nose/palate/throat, itchy/watery/red eyes.

CONTRAINDICATIONS
ALLEGRA™ is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to any of its ingredients.

PRECAUTIONS

Drug Interactions
In two separate studies, fexofenadine hydrochloride 120 mg twice daily (twice the recommended dose) was co-administered with erythromycin 500 mg every 8 hours or ketoconazole 400 mg once daily under steady-state conditions in normal, healthy volunteers (n=24, each study). No differences in adverse events or QTc interval were observed when subjects were administered fexofenadine hydrochloride alone or in combination with erythromycin or ketoconazole. The findings of these studies are summarized in the following table:

Effects on Steady-State Fexofenadine Pharmacokinetics After 7 Days of Co-Administration with Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 120 mg Every 12 Hours (twice recommended dose) in Normal Volunteers (n=24)

Concomitant Drug	C _{max} (Peak plasma concentration)	AUC _{0-12h} (Extent of systemic exposure)
Erythromycin (500 mg every 8 hrs)	+82%	+109%
Ketoconazole (400 mg once daily)	+135%	+164%

The mechanisms of these interactions are unknown, and the potential for interaction with other azole antifungal or macrolide agents has not been studied. These changes in plasma levels were within the range of plasma levels achieved in adequate and well-controlled clinical trials. Fexofenadine had no effect on the pharmacokinetics of erythromycin or ketoconazole.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility

The carcinogenic potential and reproductive toxicity of fexofenadine hydrochloride were assessed using terfenadine studies with adequate fexofenadine exposure (based on plasma area-under-the-curve [AUC] values). No evidence of carcinogenicity was observed when mice and rats were given daily oral doses of 50 and 150 mg/kg of terfenadine for 18 and 24 months, respectively; these doses resulted in plasma AUC values of fexofenadine that were up to four times the human therapeutic value (based on a 60-mg twice-daily fexofenadine hydrochloride dose).

In *in-vitro* (Bacterial Reverse Mutation, CHO/HGPRT Forward Mutation, and Rat Lymphocyte Chromosomal Aberration assays) and *in-vivo* (Mouse Bone Marrow Micronucleus assay) tests, fexofenadine hydrochloride revealed no evidence of mutagenicity.

In rat fertility studies, dose-related reductions in implants and increases in postimplantation losses were observed at oral doses equal to or greater than 150 mg/kg of terfenadine; these doses produced plasma AUC values of fexofenadine that were equal to or greater than three times the human therapeutic value (based on a 60-mg twice-daily fexofenadine hydrochloride dose).

Pregnancy

Teratogenic Effects: Category C. There was no evidence of teratogenicity in rats or rabbits at oral terfenadine doses up to 300 mg/kg; these doses produced fexofenadine plasma AUC values that were up to 4 and 37 times the human therapeutic value (based on a 60-mg twice-daily fexofenadine hydrochloride dose), respectively. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Fexofenadine hydrochloride should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

Nonteratogenic Effects. Dose-related decreases in pup weight gain and survival were observed in rats exposed to oral doses equal to and greater than 150 mg/kg of terfenadine; all these doses the plasma AUC values of fexofenadine were equal to or greater than 3 times the human therapeutic values (based on a 60-mg twice-daily fexofenadine hydrochloride dose).

Nursing Mothers

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in women during lactation. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk, caution should be exercised when fexofenadine hydrochloride is administered to a nursing woman.

Pediatric Use

Safety and effectiveness of ALLEGRA™ in pediatric patients under the age of 12 years have not been established. Across well-controlled clinical trials in patients with seasonal allergic rhinitis, a total of 205 patients between the ages of 12 to 18 years received doses ranging from 60 mg to 240 mg twice daily for up to two weeks. Adverse events were similar in this group compared to patients above the age of 16 years.

Geriatric Use

In placebo-controlled trials, 42 patients, age 60 to 80 years, received doses of 20 mg to 240 mg of fexofenadine twice daily for up to two weeks. Adverse events were similar in this group to patients under age 60 years.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

In placebo-controlled clinical trials, which included 2461 patients receiving fexofenadine hydrochloride at doses of 20 mg to 240 mg twice daily, adverse events were similar in fexofenadine hydrochloride and placebo-treated patients. The incidence of adverse events, including drowsiness, was not dose related and was similar across subgroups defined by age, gender, and race. The percent of patients who withdrew prematurely because of adverse events was 2.2% with fexofenadine hydrochloride vs 3.3% with placebo. All adverse events that were reported by greater than 1% of patients who received the recommended daily dose of fexofenadine hydrochloride (60 mg twice-daily), and that were more common with fexofenadine than placebo, are listed in the following table:

Adverse Experiences Reported in Placebo-Controlled Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis Clinical Trials at Rates of Greater Than 1%

Adverse Experience	Fexofenadine 60 mg Twice Daily (n=673)	Placebo Twice Daily (n=671)
Viral infection (cold, flu)	2.5%	1.5%
Nausea	1.6%	1.5%
Dysmenorrhea	1.5%	0.3%
Drowsiness	1.3%	0.9%
Dyspepsia	1.3%	0.6%
Fatigue	1.3%	0.9%

Adverse events occurring in greater than 1% of fexofenadine hydrochloride-treated patients (60 mg twice daily), but that were more common in the placebo-treated group, include headache and throat irritation. The frequency and magnitude of laboratory abnormalities were similar in fexofenadine hydrochloride and placebo-treated patients.

Prescribing Information as of October 1996

Hoechst Marion Roussel, Inc.
Kansas City, MO 64137 USA

US Patents 4,254,129; 5,375,693

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Hoechst Marion Roussel

Hoechst Marion Roussel, Inc., Kansas City, MO 64137 USA

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THE DIRECTOR'S CUT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

WAITING FOR MORE 'GUFFMAN'

SCRIPTELESS, dirt cheap, full of corn-fed yokels—hardly the makings of movie greatness. Still, the art-house darling *Waiting for Guffman* (1997, Warner, R, \$96.99) now looks to join its forebear *This Is Spinal Tap* as a rental perennial. And for those who can't get enough of *Guffman's* improvisational lunacy, there's another 58½ hours. Learning from his experience with *Spinal Tap* (itself a flameout-turned-video classic), Christopher Guest reduced the endless footage to an 84-minute mockumentary. "Whatever didn't drive the story had to go," explains Eugene Levy, who with Guest cocreated the story line about a Missouri hamlet's risible flirtations with community theater. "Chris swears he's making us a two-hour tape," says Catherine O'Hara, who played Shella Albertson. "But we all keep asking for the eight-hour tape." With 97 percent of it still unseen, *Guffman* could provide a sequel—or soap opera—made purely from outtakes, as its actors attest:

THE BACK STORY The rehearsing of scenes between Dairy Queen princess Libby (Parker Posey) and grease monkey Johnny Savage (Matt Keeslar) hints at past romantic dalliances. "Johnny was being too loose with his hands," says O'Hara.

THE LOST CHARACTERS Flamboyant ex-Army man Corky (Guest) brings gifts to Johnny's folks (Frances Fisher and Brian Doyle-Murray) to persuade them to let their son perform. "The father talks about seeing action in World War II," says Levy. "And Corky says, 'I saw action too, but it wasn't necessarily off the base.'" Editing made the elder Savages walk-ons.

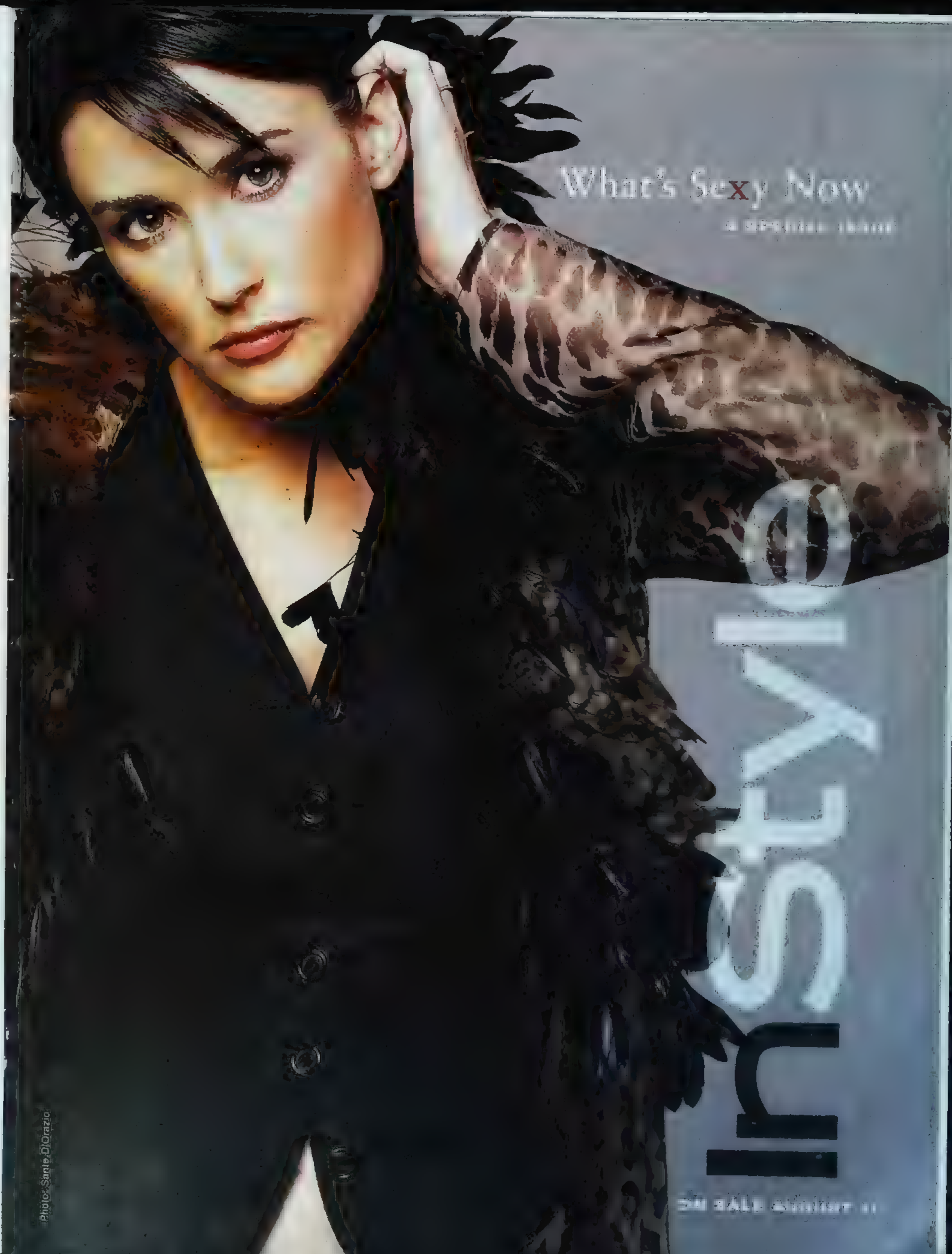
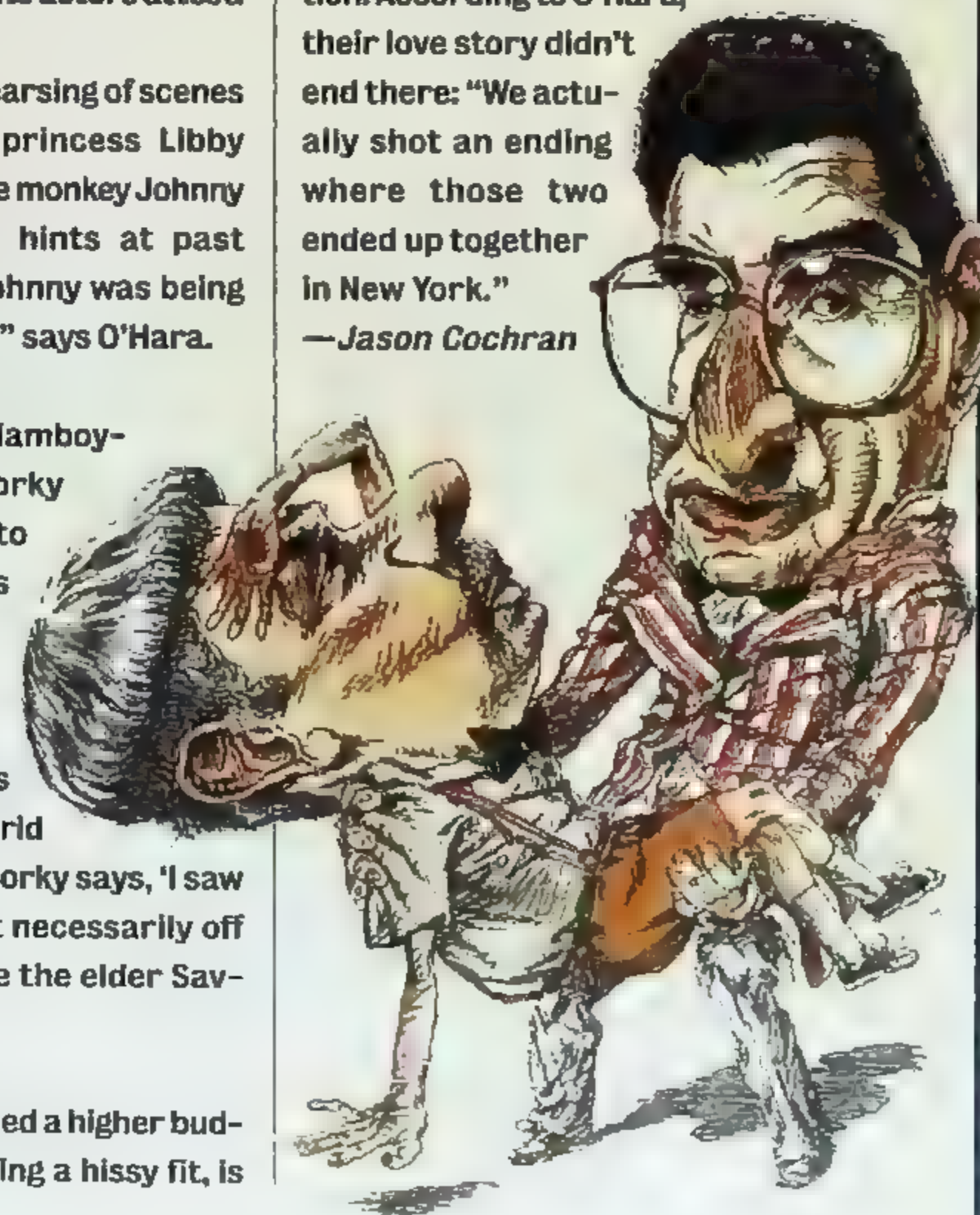
THE MEDICAL DRAMA Denied a higher budget, Corky collapses during a hissy fit, is

rushed to the hospital, and demands sedation. "He was lying there with his toupee not quite on," recalls Levy. "And the doctor tells us he's never quite seen anything like this, other than in some children."

THE PSYCHODRAMA O'Hara's meek Shella seeks revenge on her egomaniacal husband, Ron (Fred Willard), during a game of catch: "You could see how I threw the ball to him, once in a while trying to hit his head, that this was the saddest marriage."

THE BITTER END The Albertsons wind up supplementing their pathetic income as Hollywood extras by selling hand cream over the phone. And when he moves to Miami to become an entertainer, Dr. Pearl (Levy) ditches his wife (Linda Kash) and baby. "Preview audiences didn't take to that too well at all," says Levy.

THE SWEET END The final cut shows councilman Steven Stark (Michael Hitchcock) secretly ogle Corky in postshow admiration. According to O'Hara, their love story didn't end there: "We actually shot an ending where those two ended up together in New York."
—Jason Cochran



What's Sexy Now

a sequel to...

ON SALE August 11

The Week

Recent Movies

LOST HIGHWAY Bill Pullman, Patricia Arquette, Balthazar Getty, Robert Blake, Robert Loggia (1997, PolyGram, R, \$101.99) The looping plot of David Lynch's latest head scratcher makes no sense, but at least it's not boring: A saxman (Pullman) is convicted of killing his wife (Arquette, who does most of her acting with her breasts). While in prison, Pullman transforms into a young mechanic (Getty, a cross-breed between Charlie Sheen and Corey Feldman), who starts an affair with gangster Loggia's moll (also played by Arquette's breasts).

Meanwhile, Blake—hoping for a career renaissance à la Dennis Hopper in Lynch's *Blue Velvet*—runs around in white pancake makeup trying to look eerie. Lynch's dark visuals transfer so murky to video that the screen often goes black, and you may believe the movie's over. Or maybe that's just wishful thinking. **C** —Bruce Fretts

TWO FRIENDS Kris Bidenko, Emma Coles (1986, Milestone, unrated, \$59.99) Director Jane Campion's deeply moving first feature film (made for Australian TV and given a brief U.S. theatrical release last year) proves that the spooky, em-

pathic postfeminist insights of *Sweetie*, *An Angel at My Table*, and the Oscar-winning *The Piano* were there from the get-go. *Friends* shows the dissolving bond between two adolescent best buds—hapless “bad girl” Kelly (Bidenko) and helplessly prim “good girl” Louise (Coles)—but it tells the tale in reverse, starting with Kelly's life as a punky drifter and tracing the relationship back to a point of common, childish grace. Home video provides an end run around the slightly pretentious structure; if you watch the whole film, rewind, and play the first sequences again, the sense of two women staring across the gulf of their diverging destinies becomes even more heart-breaking. **A-** —Ty Burr

SHADOW CONSPIRACY Charlie Sheen, Donald Sutherland, Linda Hamilton (1997, Hollywood, R, \$103.99) In their mad dash to get this flick into theaters before the similar *Absolute Power*, Sheen & Co. neglected to pack a few items, namely a credible plot, fascinating characters, narrative momentum, emotional complexity, excitement, suspense, intrigue, passion, wit, sex appeal, and—oh, yeah—a point. This is the kind of turkey in which dastardly government officials (could Sheen's friendly mentor Donald Sutherland be involved?) carefully record their murders in computer databases that boot unauthorized users off the system “in two minutes.” The clumsy video cropping adds injury to insult, but not even a screen eight miles wide could save this pathetic White House “thriller.” **D** —Mike D'Angelo

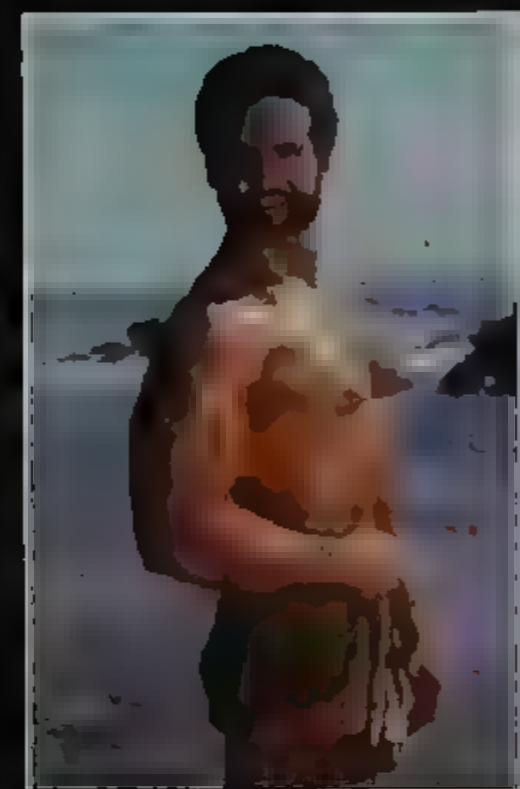
Made for TV

BACK IN BUSINESS Brian Bosworth, Joe Torry (1996, Columbia TriStar, R, \$98.99) Former Seattle Sea-

HERCULES OF THE WEEK

Steve Reeves

The super-buff star of yesteryear is back in *Hercules Recycled*, a What's Up, Tiger Lily? style spoof that reedit's footage from Reeves' 1959 hit *Hercules* and its 1960 sequel, dubbing in a loopy story about power struggles in the chariot industry in post-apocalyptic L.A. Available for \$9.95 from Tapeworm at 800-367-8437.



hawk linebacker Bosworth has come a long way since his action hero debut in 1991's *Stone Cold*. Now he'll flash an occasional grin to go along with his all-business frown. But fledgling charisma can't save this clanking thriller in which Bosworth plays a cop, unjustly suspended, out to bust his corrupt colleagues. Sloppy camera work leaves

some elaborate stunts sprawling right out of the frame, and the comic relief also goes too far. Our hero has recurring therapy sessions with a radio call-in shrink. A self-mocking Boz is one thing, but a touchy-feely Boz—don't even jest. **C-** —Michael Sauter

POLTERGEIST: THE LEGACY Derek De-Lint, Helen Shaver (1997, MGM/UA, unrated, \$59.99) Don't rent this horror show expecting another chapter in Spielberg's saga. Behind the shamelessly misleading title there's only a schlocky Showtime series pilot about a secret society that dourly fights the forces of hell. Some surprisingly good F/X serve as window dressing for clichés from other, better movies: the Pandora's box of evil spirits, the demonic possession in the shaking bed, the spawn-of-Satan birth sequence. This last bit, though, is an eyeful. Once you've seen Shaver deliver a little devil, then get dragged around the room by her umbilical cord, you'll have seen it all—or at least all you want to. **D** —MS

VAMPIRELLA Talisa Soto, Roger Daltrey (1997, New Horizons, unrated, \$59.99) This Roger Corman production—a tale of space vampires from the planet Draculon and the diaper-clad heroine who travels across space and time to stop them—is really a remarkable piece of work. Never before has there been a film that so acutely conveys what it is to be attacked by a vampire: With its bargain-basement acting (the Who's Daltrey and ex-Bond girl Soto are about as compelling as soap), Etch-A-Sketch special effects, and sophomoric script, *Vampirella*, which premiered on Showtime, actually sucks the life right out of you. **F** —Marc Bernardin

Foreign

LA CEREMONIE Jacqueline Bisset, Isabelle Huppert, Sandrine Bonnaire (1996, New Yorker, unrated, subtitled, \$89.99) The least artsy-fartsy of the French new-wave directors, Claude Chabrol has turned out to be the most prolific, cranking out distressing little moral thrillers that wash up on these shores like poisonous jellyfish. *Cérémonie*, based on a Ruth Rendell novel, is a tale of class resentment that slowly turns homicidal, with illiterate housemaid Bonnaire conspiring with wacko village postal clerk Huppert against the former's upper-class employers. Featuring Bisset as a creamy bourgeois matron, the film offers the sight of three fine actresses playing a subtle, deadly game. Don't let the help screen this one at home. **B** —TB

PRISONER OF THE MOUNTAINS Oleg Menshikov, Sergei Bodrov Jr. (1996, Orion Classics, R, subtitled, \$95.99) Two Russian soldiers—one a cynical, arrogant officer, the other a raw, frightened recruit—are captured in Chechnya and used as a bargaining tool by one of the village elders, whose son is being held captive by the Russian forces. The deal quickly falls apart, and the two men, polar opposites in almost every respect, are left with nothing to do but plot an unlikely escape or await an ugly death. Anyone want to guess whether the defiant ones gradually come to respect one another? While this 1996 Oscar nominee (adapted, with disturbingly few modifications, from a 150-year-old novella by Tolstoy) is familiar in its broad strokes, the details are another matter entirely. Quiet revelations are buried in virtually every scene and play well given the intimacy of video. A tale exceptionally well told; Leo would have approved. **A-** —MD'A

Vintage Movie

THE REPTILE Ray Barrett, Jennifer Daniel, Jacqueline Pearce (1966, Anchor Bay, unrated, \$15.98) Hardcore Hammerheads (fans of Britain's Hammer Films) should be drooling at the prospect of 16 new-to-video titles making their way to the shelves over the next year. Or not. While the first four releases (all respectfully restored and letterboxed) include two Christopher Lee efforts, *Rasputin*, *The Mad Monk* and *Dracula: Prince of Darkness*, and the promising-sounding *Plague of the Zombies*, only *The Reptile* has the fright stuff. The intriguing plot involves a series of ghastly deaths in a remote English village, a theologian's mysterious daughter (Cher look-alike Pearce), and an unwary married couple (Barrett and Daniel). You'd have to be an idiot not to guess the outcome, but who cares? It's fun all the way, and the climax is indeed horrible. **B** —Tim Purtell



AGENT ORANGE: Lee's *Rasputin* lacks *The Reptile's* scare quotient

TOP VIDEOS

'JUNGLE' FEVER

IT REALLY IS A JUNGLE out there, as Disney's *Jungle2Jungle* roars into the top spots its first week on tape—just ahead of two other Disney-owned titles, *Scream* and *Sling Blade*. The Mouse got some retroactive glory this week, too: Though disappointing overall, rental figures from the first half of 1997 show that Disney led the pack of video distributors with 21.45 percent of the rental market and a prize of \$730.29 million in consumer spending, according to the Video Software Dealers Association.



2'S COMPANY: Sam Huntington and Tim Allen

TOP 10 TAPE RENTALS

LAST WEEK		WEEKS ON CHART
1	JUNGLE2JUNGLE Tim Allen, Walt Disney	1
2	1 SCREAM Neve Campbell, Dimension	6
3	4 SLING BLADE Billy Bob Thornton, Miramax	2
4	2 ABSOLUTE POWER Clint Eastwood, Warner	4
5	3 METRO Eddie Murphy, Touchstone	3
6	6 MICHAEL John Travolta, Warner	8
7	7 DONNIE BRASCO Johnny Depp, Columbia TriStar	2
8	13 THE RELIC Penelope Ann Miller, Paramount	3
9	6 VEGAS VACATION Chevy Chase, Warner	4
10	10 PRIVATE PARTS Howard Stern, Paramount	2

TAPE SALES

1	JUNGLE2JUNGLE Tim Allen, Walt Disney, \$22.99	1
2	1 FUN AND FANCY FREE Animated, Walt Disney, \$26.99	3
3	7 RUDYARD KIPLING'S THE SECOND JUNGLE BOOK: MOWGLI AND BALOO Bill Campbell, Columbia TriStar, \$15.95	2
4	2 THE ROCK Nicolas Cage, Hollywood, \$19.99	10
5	10 GREASE John Travolta, Paramount, \$14.95	47
6	4 JERRY MAGUIRE Tom Cruise, Columbia TriStar, \$24.99	10
7	3 HAPPY GILMORE Adam Sandler, Universal, \$14.98	10
8	— MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS Richard Dreyfuss, Hollywood, \$14.99	12
9	9 PRETTY WOMAN Julia Roberts, Touchstone, \$9.99	73
10	12 JURASSIC PARK Sam Neill, Universal, \$9.98	104

KID VIDEO SALES

1	1 THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME Animated, Walt Disney, \$26.99	21
2	2 BAMBI Animated, Walt Disney, \$26.99	183
3	— FUN AND FANCY FREE Animated, Walt Disney, \$26.99	1
4	— A RUGRATS VACATION Animated, Paramount, \$12.95	1
5	9 MARY-KATE & ASHLEY: CASE OF U.S. NAVY MYSTERY Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, Dualstar, \$12.95	19
6	20 BARNEY'S CAMP WANNARUNNAROUND Barney, Lyons Group, \$14.95	3
7	6 MARY-KATE & ASHLEY: CASE OF THE VOLCANO ADVENTURE Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, Dualstar, \$12.95	18
8	3 GOOSEBUMPS: THE WEREWOLF OF FEVER SWAMP Brendan Fletcher, FoxVideo, \$14.98	17
9	1 BARNEY'S MUSICAL SCRAPBOOK Barney, Lyons Group, \$14.95	11
10	5 WALLACE AND GROMIT: A CLOSE SHAVE Animated, FoxVideo, \$9.98	39

SOURCE: VIDEO BUSINESS FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUG. 3, 1997
KID VIDEO DATA: BILLBOARD FROM THE ISSUE DATED AUG. 11, 1997

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Picture Imperfect

Streaming video claims to bring nonstop—and instantaneous—images to the Net. For now, it may just have you screaming. **by Ty Burr**

EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE days when you wish the Internet would just...go away? That's the kind of week this writer has had diddling around in the brave, though insanely annoying, new world of streaming video on the Web.

What's streaming video? you ask as you wait for the veins in my head to stop visi-

bly throbbing. Good question. It used to be that when you wanted to experience sound and vision via the Internet, you had to download files. Sound files took some minutes to come down the pipe; video files seemingly took days—and there was nothing you could do before they completely loaded in except play *Tetris* until your eyes glazed over.

RealAudio, from Progressive Networks (www.realaudio.com), changed all that in late 1995. Once you downloaded and installed the playback software and clicked on a sound file, you would start to hear audio seconds later, as the rest of the file was still streaming in. Recently, with the advent of Progressive Networks' RealPlayer, streaming video has become a reality—and similar browser widgets from VDOLive (www.VDOLive.com), Vivo (www.vivo.com), and Vxtreme (www.vxtreme.com) prove that a lot of people think there's money to be made in them thar bits.

At least someday. Right now few would dare think of charging users to watch a glitchy, stuttering image the size of a Triscuit on their computer screens. But if the players from Vivo, Vxtreme, VDOLive, and a stripped-down version of RealPlayer are free for the download, there's one exception: RealPlayer Plus costs \$29.99. Ostensibly, you're paying for the difference. Unlike the competition, RealPlayer Plus essentially serves as a Web tuner, enabling the user to either randomly scan or preselect audio and video from around the Net—including network feeds and a multiplicity of radio stations.

The operating analogy here might be the early days of ham radio, but even that nascent medium never left you with the rising-temperature, ready-to-throw-the-fer-shlugginer-machine-out-the-window sense of frustration. See, even if digital technology continues to improve—and it will—the real villain is the increasingly clogged Internet pathways themselves, and they'll only get worse. Take, for instance, RealPlayer's two

showcase sites. Maybe if I logged on at 4 a.m. I could at least be able to watch the three shorts directed by Spike Lee (www.timecast.com/spikelee/theater/lobby.html) without the connection breaking down. And while the hugely ambitious Liner Notes (www.linernotes.com) from esteemed producer Don Was pledges record-biz razzle-dazzle, the slick Web interface took so long to appear that I never made it to the video section.

Streaming video isn't without promise. A recent live visit to the set of Kevin Costner's *The Postman*, using Vxtreme's Web Theater, went off without a hitch, and I've had success watching David Bowie and Spice Girls videos at the Virgin Records site using the RealPlayer (though I'm not really surprised that I can't get through to the Farsi news feeds from Iran Sima TV, and CNN's Vxtreme hookup hasn't worked for me yet).

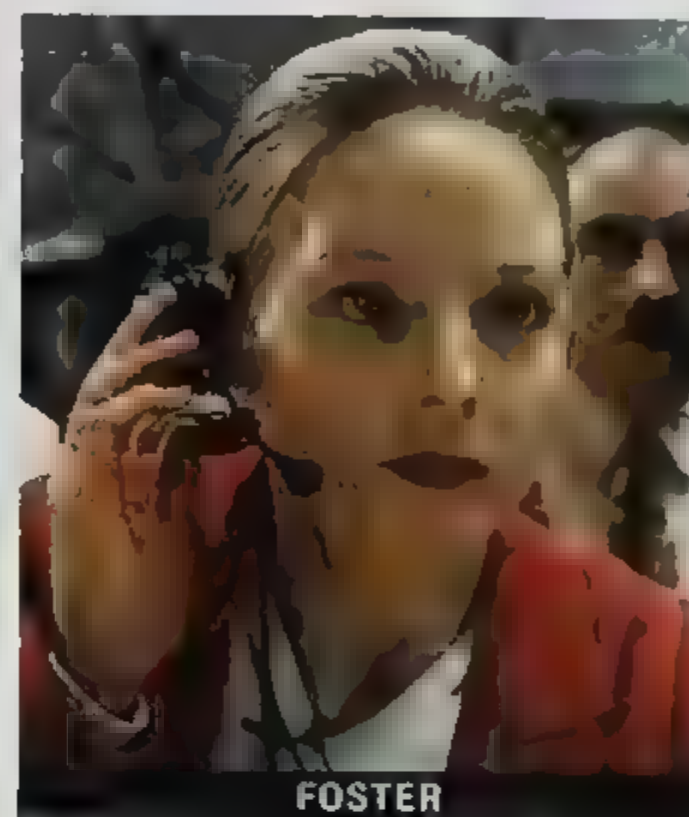
Easier to access—and more in synch with the Net's anyone-can-do-it ethos—are such less-trafficked sites as *Ren & Stimpy* creator Spumco (www.spumco.com), with its hilarious Japanese pizza commercial, and the promo video from Cowichan Senior Secondary School in British Columbia (www.cowichan.com/educ/cowhigh/index.html). And yes, there are the inevitable sex-video sites.

But you know what? Even when all the connections line up and the image comes through loud and clear, the thrill of streaming video lies only in its novelty value for now. You can, after all, watch much of this stuff on TV; the Net just makes it available when you want it—and if you can get through. Note that I say *you*. I'm going out for a drink. ■

ONLINE FILM FERVOR

'Contact' High

The online response to Jodie Foster's screen romance with outer space has been out of this world. "Contact was one of the best movies I've seen," enthuses netizen Dan Heller, "and [I] would encourage everyone to run, not walk...and see it immediately." The unequivocal rave for this summer's cerebral sci-fi flick is posted on Heller's place in cyberspace (contact.earthlink.net/~argv), along with a constellation—hundreds at last count—of



FOSTER

adulatory home pages that erupted after the official site (www.contact-themovie.com) launched in June. Now the craze has surpassed even distributor Warner Bros.' hopes. "We've had no other film with this kind of activity," says Warner New Media veep Don Buckley.

The E-mail exuberance began with a shrewd marketing ploy: Warner execs

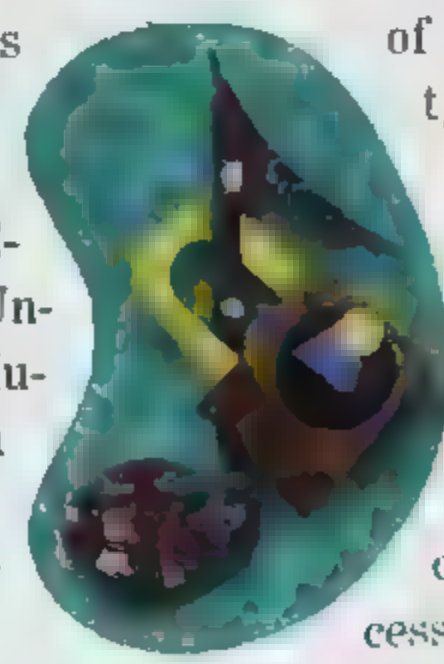
enlisted Net services EarthLink and WebChat to bust open free Net space and give guidance to HTML-savvy fans. Then the studio cashed in, plastering choice quotes from the fan postings across the movie's newspaper ads. "The movie has touched people," says Buckley. And people have stayed in *Contact*. —Kipp Cheng

MUSIC-THEFT DEFENSE

Piracy of High Cs

THE HIGH-TECH LOWLIFES who rip off music from the Web may have finally met their match. So far, rampant piracy has hampered the secure selling of tunes online. But now a snarling digital watchdog is hounding the bad guys: Unveiled in July on Music Boulevard, a New York-based online CD retailer (www.musicblvd.com), N2K's e_mod (encoded music online delivery) enables Web surfers to download Dolby-quality singles by selected artists for 99 cents a pop. En-

ryption and digital watermarking systems will allow one-time transfer to a CD but prevent multiple downloads and trademark infringement of the tunes. Security types believe that e_mod and similar antipiracy processes have the potential to open a huge trade in music over the Internet while offering ease and accessibility to mouse mix-



ers. Next up, Knitting Factory Works (www.knittingfactory.com) debuts its own music-delivery system late this summer. —KC

AN ACT OF HATE

"Gary [Oldman] is a very intense actor! And he personally has a dangerous edge. And when you look up at Gary during a scene, you really believe that he hates you and could kill you at the drop of a hat!" —*Air Force One's* WENDY CREWSON on America Online

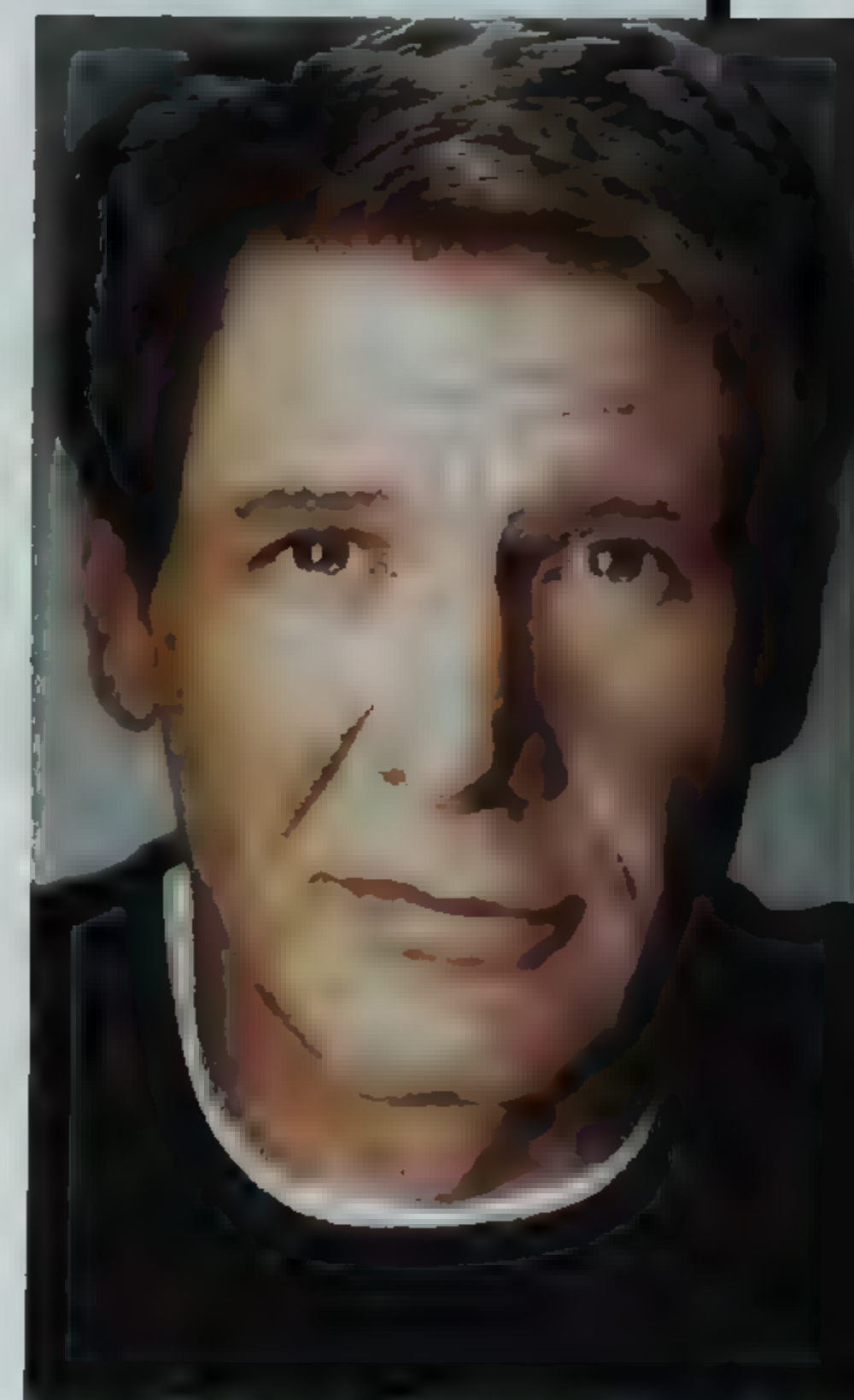
"I don't like cellular phones. Is that a pet peeve? I'm against most electronics, period. I don't know why. I have a computer, but I'm totally against it. I don't know why. I think I need to go into therapy about it." —*NewsRadio's* KHANDI ALEXANDER on Prodigy

► "[Anne Heche and I] are having a ball [shooting *6 Days/7 Nights*]. I don't have any concerns about people buying a romance between myself and Anne. She was the obvious choice to [director Ivan Reitman] and me. She brings great spark and wit and life to the part. I've never discussed any of my coworkers' personal lives before, and I don't see any reason to start now." —*Air Force One's* HARRISON FORD on E! Online

"I feel like Tom Brokaw. He never gets laughs. That guy is really not funny." —*Saturday Night Live* Weekend Update anchor NORM MACDONALD on NBC Live at Yahoo! Chat

"It was fun working with [Jennifer Aniston]. It was like working with one of the Beatles. Crowds of people just wait for her, screaming her name: Jennifa, Jennifa!" —*Picture Perfect's* JAY MOHR on Microsoft Network's *This Is Not a Test*

"It's always weird to see yourself on screen or in magazines. It's almost as if the image I see is another person and not the real me I know. The intrusion on my personal life does sometimes get to me, but I realize that it comes with the job." —*Picture Perfect's* JENNIFER ANISTON on E! Online



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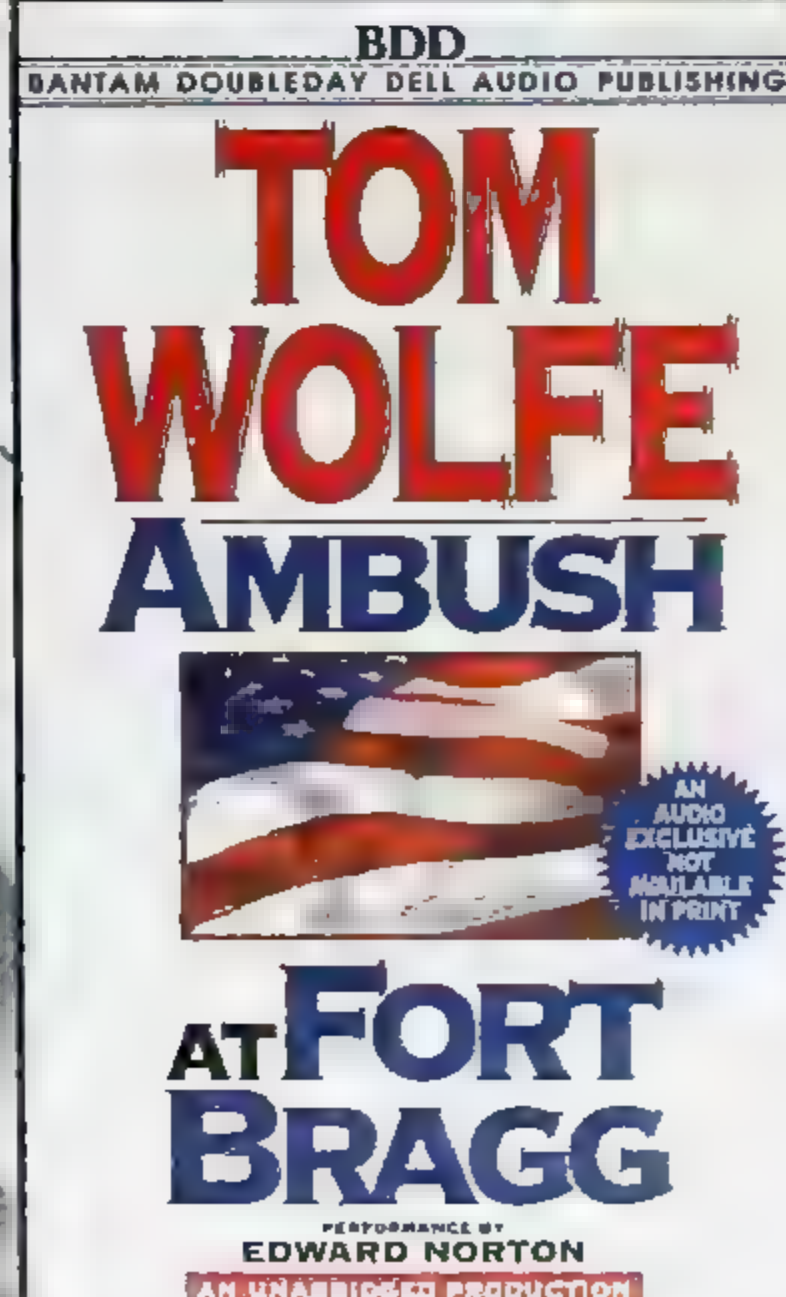
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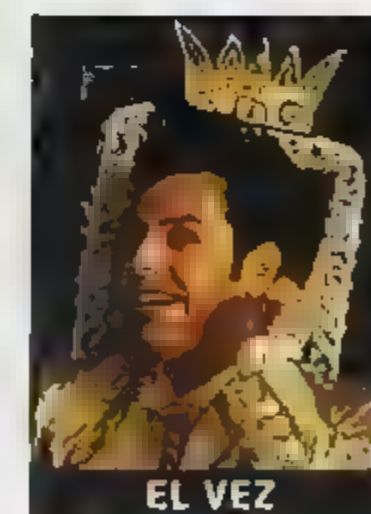


Remembering the King

Even twenty years after his death, Elvis Presley is honored in ways both outrageous and sublime. **BY JASON COCHRAN**

THE KING WAS DEAD: sprawled facedown on the red carpet in an upstairs bathroom of his Memphis mansion, Graceland. It was an ignoble end for 42-year-old, 225-pound Elvis Presley, Mississippi-born rock & roller-turned-juggernaut of recordings, stage, and screen. Or was it? In the 20 years since that afternoon of Aug. 16, 1977, everything from the cause of his death (heart disease or drug abuse?) to the circumstances of his burial (was the body a fake, and is his middle name misspelled on his gravestone?) has come into question. Perhaps the loss is simply too great to accept. Or maybe Elvis never did leave the building. Whatever the reasons, Presley has been kept alive with some extravagant tributes. Long live the King:

■ On Aug. 16, Israelis sit shivah to mourn at the **Elvis Inn**, a diner and filling station between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that's a holy land for Presleyan mementos from far and near, including a 15-foot statue by the gas pumps. On the menu: a spicy burger based on a Presley favorite—served kosher, with pita bread.



Don't forget: Some claim Elvis' mom was part Jewish. ■ On seven albums and about 1,000 live performances over nine years (he just finished his "Graceland" nightclub tour), the 33-year-old **El Vez** (born in Chula Vista as Robert Lopez) infuses original, Elvis-influenced pop with mariachi sounds and lyrics ("Mystery Train" becomes "Misery Tren," a Pancho Villa an-



PARA-NORMAL? The 10 members of Las Vegas' Flying Elvi troupe can't help falling for Presley

them)—and plenty of vintage Vegas pageantry. (One pair of orange bell-bottoms are made of Mexican blanket fabric.) ■ Oxford-educated Dr. Vernon Chadwick's annual **International Conference on Elvis Presley (ICEP)**, held this week in Memphis, is a six-day cornucopia of scholarly discourse: "We're dealing with an unprecedented phenomenon in recorded history," muses Chadwick, 44. "He so thoroughly transformed his limited humanity as to be a global possession of the human psyche." On the agenda: National Public Radio's Andrei Codrescu (who'll chronicle the event), folk artist Rev. Howard Finster (preaching "Art in the Last Days"), and lectures titled "Elvis Was a 'White Negro' First" and "Elvis Presley and the Elasticity of Gender."

■ Paul MacLeod, 54, is stuck on Elvis. First he named his boy Elvis Aaron Presley. Then he turned his house, in Holly Springs, Miss., into a jaw-dropping

fan mecca known as **GracelandToo**. Jammed with memorabilia (including some 55,000 clippings), the catch-all museum—not endorsed by the Presley estate—is open round the clock, so the MacLeods sleep in their street clothes. One thing you *won't* see on the tour is Mrs. MacLeod, whose ill-advised "Elvis or me" ultimatum was too much.

■ Formed after the 1992 movie *Honeymoon in Vegas*, the **Flying Elvi** are soaring higher than ever as the world's most popular 10-man skydiving homage to the King. Bedecked in full Elvis regalia, the troupe plummets at 160 miles per hour (while speakers blast the King) at air shows and special events across America. And—they are from Vegas—they'll also serve as earthbound groomsmen.

■ **Americans for Cloning Elvis**. Their online petition says it all: "We, the undersigned, in our enduring love for Elvis, implore all those involved in cloning to

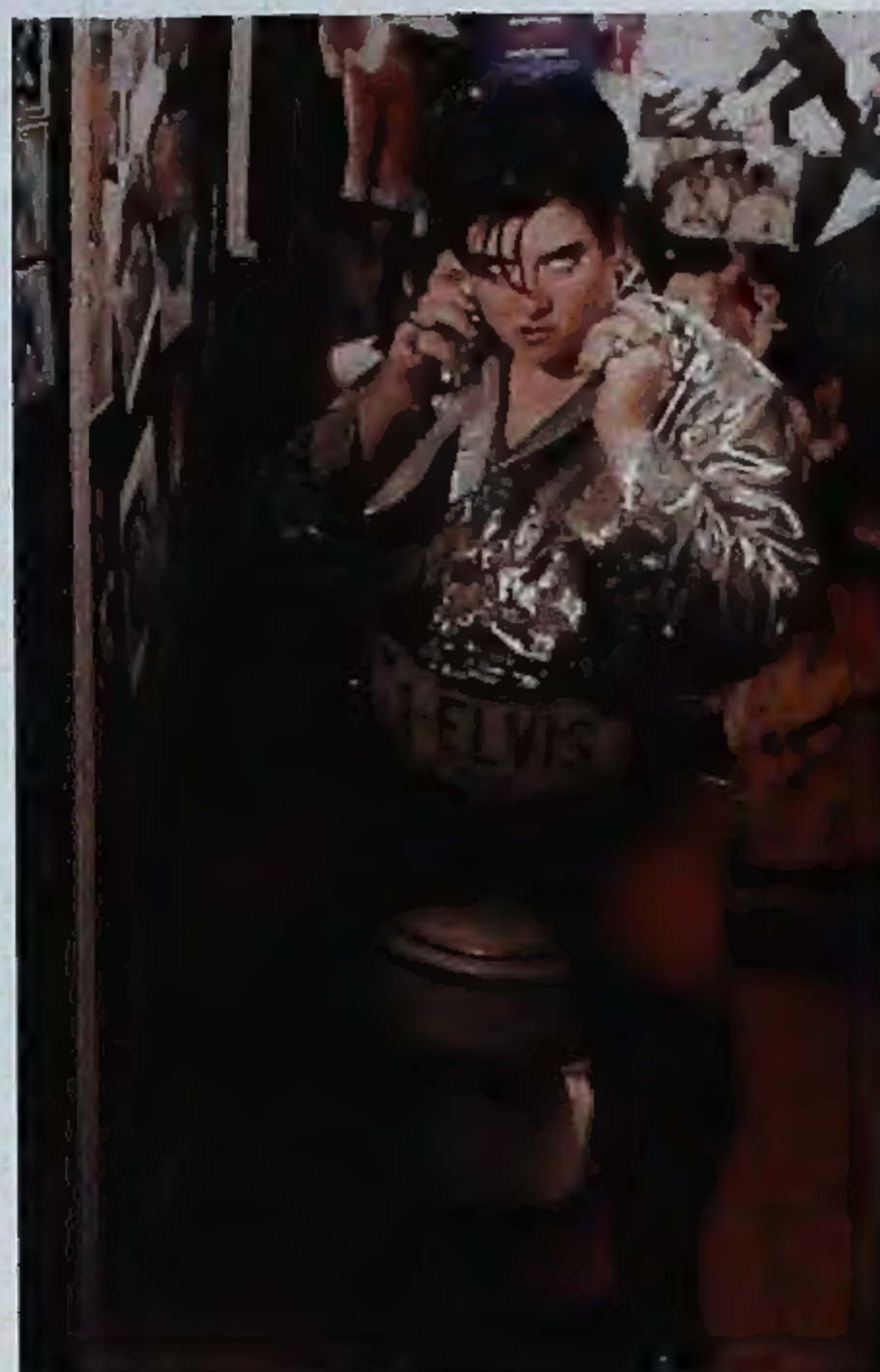
hear our plea..." (www.geocities.com/Vienna/1673).

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■ If you ask nicely (and make a small donation), **Humes Middle School** in Memphis will provide an after-hours peek at room 124, the Elvis Room, which includes artifacts from the King's unspectacular tenure there. Lucky the boy could carry a tune: His achievement test is mostly Cs.

■ Memphis' **Playhouse on the Square**, row J, seat 11, preserves the ample bun-prints of Elvis, who sat here during marathon screenings of Westerns.

■ Outside the **First Church of the Elvis Impersonator**, at bohemian hangout Javacabana in Memphis, drop a quarter into the slot reading "Bedazzle, Bemuse, Behold, and Believe" for a shimmying folk-art fantasia with photographs, pink toy motorcycles on turntables, and a red phone (the "line to Big E")—all to music including the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



ROYAL FLUSH: (Clockwise from left) Herselvis in the North End Caffe; Plywood Elvis; a Vegas wedding

■ Are you lonesome tonight? Ever since his 1967 wedding to Priscilla at Las Vegas' Aladdin Hotel, Elvis and weddings have gone together like peanut butter and bananas. At the Viva Las Vegas Wedding Chapel, a \$650 prix fixe **Elvis/Blue Hawaii Wedding** is ministered by "Elvis" and includes fog and two hula girls. For the cash poor, the **24-Hour Church of Elvis**, a riot of kitschy pop art in Portland, Ore., offers cheapie hitches at its makeshift altar (\$25 to make it legal, \$5 otherwise). Afterward, newlyweds can parade around the block with a "Just Married" sign and a fake cake on wheels. Polaroids cost \$2.50 extra.

■ An ICEP appearance last year by **Elvis Herselvis**, a lesbian cross-dressing impersonator (with her four-piece backup band, the Straight White Males), got Graceland

all shook up—it seems the corporation won't endorse drag Kings, no matter how well they gyrate. "Elvis crossed a lot of gender lines, race lines, class lines. Graceland forgets how insidious he was to the American moral fiber. Just like a lesbian today," says Herselvis herself, Leigh Crow, 32. "I can get into the same place he did." And how: August sees Herselvis' burning love in 21 cities—including two gigs in Memphis.

■ Hankering for Presleyan glory, Joe Parilli, owner of San Francisco's **North End Caffe**, began plastering the unisex washroom with mementos. Nineteen months later, his commode ode is flush with albums, photos, and ceramic busts—and a draw for pilgrims nationwide. But in a bathroom? "That's where the King died," maintains Parilli, 26. "Right there on the throne." ■

TIMECAPSULE

AUG. 16, 1977

FITTINGLY, PRESLEY'S DEATH occurs during a '50s nostalgia craze; Henry Winkler, a.k.a. the Fonz (right), helps ABC's *Happy Days* become the top-rated series. COLLEEN McCULLOUGH'S Aussie epic *The Thorn Birds* roasts atop the best-seller list. In 1983, ABC's 10-hour version

will become the second-most-watched miniseries ever. GEORGE LUCAS' *STAR WARS* continues its run as the top box office attraction. Nearly 20 years later, a restored release would be the No. 1 film again. BEE GEE BRO Andy Gibb's first single, "I Just Want to Be Your Everything," notches its third No. 1 week. His brothers



would hit even greater (falsetto) heights with their *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack that December and, like *Star Wars*, resurface in 1997. AND IN THE REAL WORLD, after four years of insisting there were no living MIAs in Vietnam, the Pentagon says it will resume the search; 2,133 soldiers are still unaccounted for. —JC

PHOTOGRAPH BY L.W. SCHERMERHORN

7 things to do rest of August!

The Country!

THE BOSTON POPPS ORCHESTRA
AMERICAN VERMONT
KEITH LOCKHART



Plead NOT Guilty!



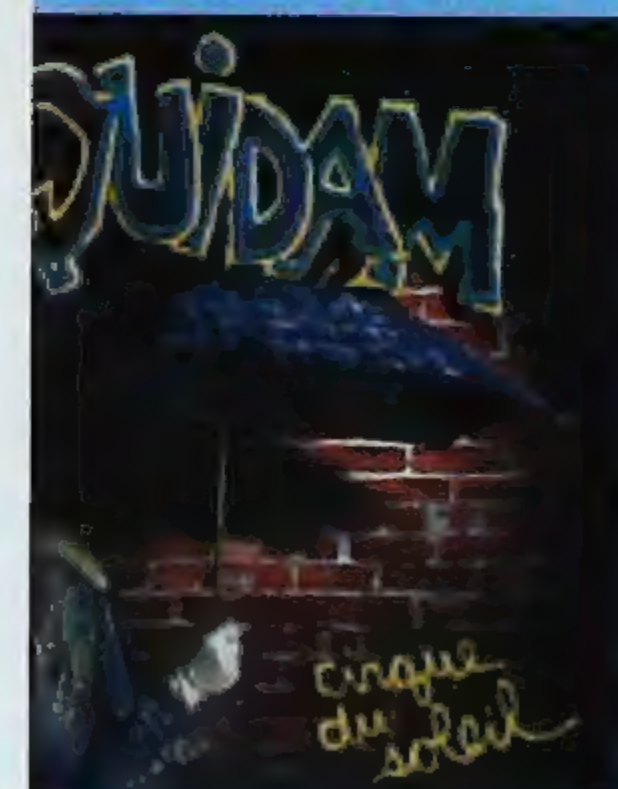
Master The Force!



Immigrate!



in The Circus!



Lounge Around!



BEST
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9 Exciting things to do with the rest of August!

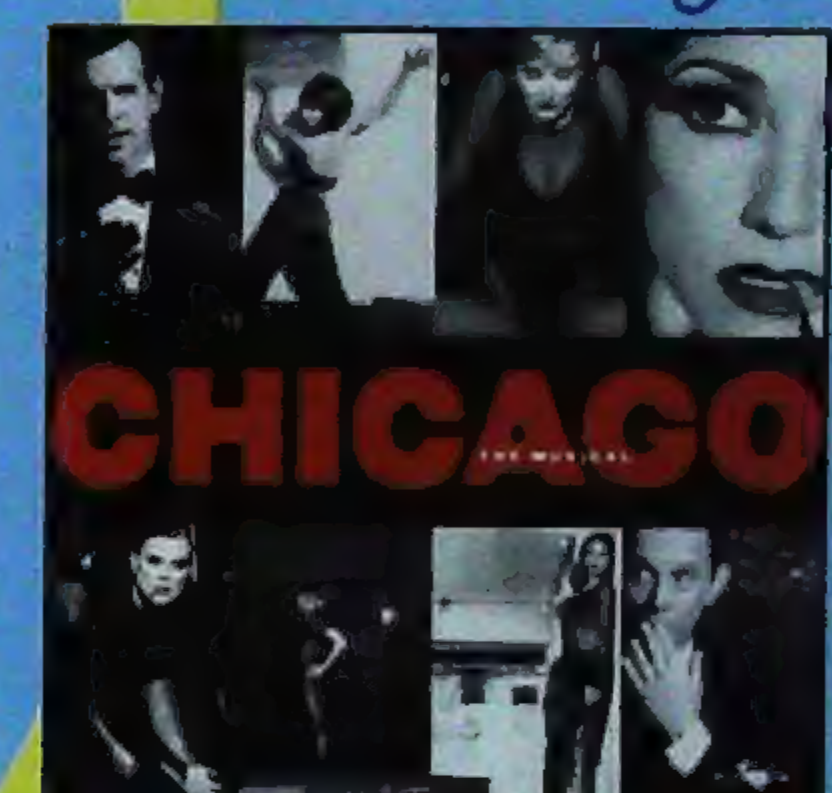
Brave The Atlantic!



See The Country!



Plead NOT Guilty!



Expose Yourself!



Master The Force!



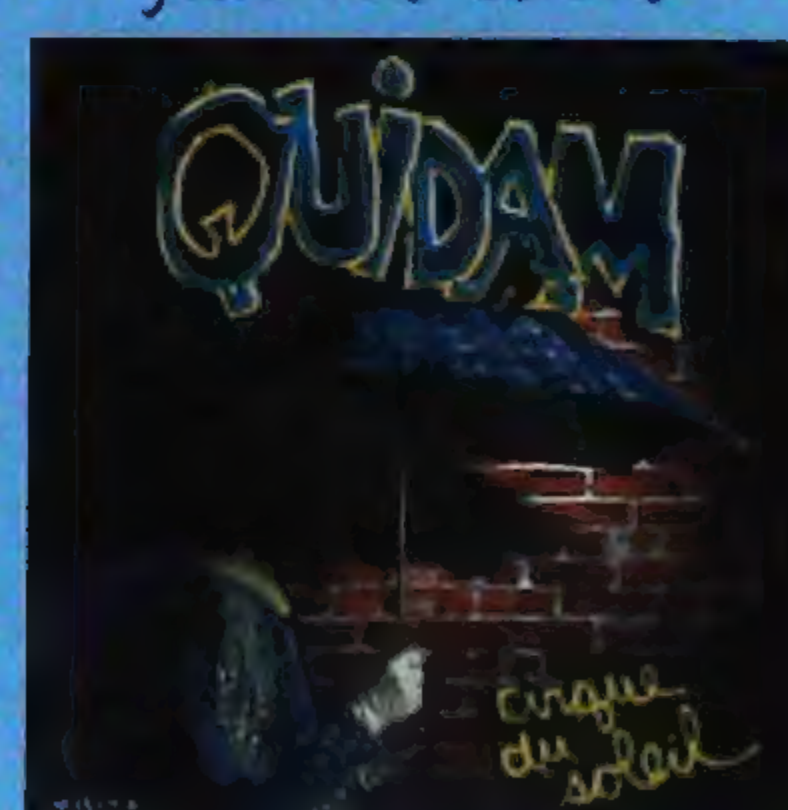
Immigrate!



Toot Your Own Horn!



Join The Circus!



Lounge Around!



Available on RCA VICTOR

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and
Unobtainable**

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COMING SOON